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BY

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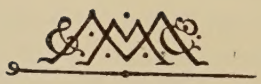

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A History of The British Army

BY

THE HON. J. W. FORTESCUE, LL.D., D.Litt.
HONORARY FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

VOL. XII

1839–1852

Quae caret ora cruore nostro?

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PREFACE

This volume is concerned mainly with India; and unfortunately the original documents relating to the events therein narrated are preserved in India. The authorities at the Record Department of the India Office have been, as always, most courteous and helpful, but they could give me nothing except the collection known as the "Secret Consultations of the Governor-General and Council of India," which is quoted in my pages under the initials "I.O.S.C." It purports to contain transcripts of all the documents which came before the Governor-General in Council at each meeting, and it is, on the whole, the most disorderly and chaotic assembly of papers that I have encountered in more than thirty years of research. In the first place the volumes are so gigantic, heavy and unwieldy, that it is difficult to read them comfortably in any attitude. In the second, many of the documents before the Council (as is plain from internal evidence) have not been transcribed at all, while others have been copied two or three times over. In the third the transcripts have not been checked, and contain many corrupt passages which cost me much trouble to emend. In the fourth, many of the clerks wrote vile hands, and occasionally one of the idler among them has filled up his exhausted ink-pot with water instead of ink, and has left writing so faint that it can only be read with much suffering to the eyes. In the fifth, there is no index, and, though the volumes are numbered, the pages are not, so that it is impossible to give an accurate reference to them. In the sixth,

if the Governor-General happened to be closer to the scene of action than his Council, there is no reference to that scene of action at all. And, finally, the documents observe no kind of order, chronological or other, as may be seen by my first footnote to page 106. Altogether the collection forms an appropriate monument to the administrative methods of the East India Company. However, after toiling through several score of these volumes, I got something new out of them for the Afghan war, though little for the wars in Sind and the Punjab. I wish that I could have paid a visit to the archives at Lahore, for I should not have grudged the fatigue and the labour, could I have afforded the time and the money; and, though this was impossible, I am not the less oppressed by a feeling of self-reproach that I have left an important source of information unexplored.

I wish to offer my grateful thanks to the Military Department of the India Office, which allowed me the use of certain maps to ensure correctness of the *terrain* in Afghanistan. Their ready kindness and courtesy in affording me this help lay me under deep obligation to them. I must also express my warmest gratitude to Mr. H. W. Cribb, my colleague now for thirty years, for the beautiful maps which he has produced for this volume. Circumstances of a private nature have in this instance beset his task with such peculiar difficulties as to call forth my special admiration for his unabated courage, zeal and diligence. Lastly, I have to thank my friend Miss Anne Macleod for much valuable help in the matter of transcription and of the index. I only wish that all paid workers would show the same care, industry and intelligence as this good voluntary helper. I shall be fortunate indeed if fate grant me the assistance of Mr. Cribb and Miss Macleod through the two remaining volumes with which I hope to conclude this history.

J. W. F.

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CHAPTER XXII

With the fall of Bhurtpore India sank into the tranquillity of the overawed; and early in 1828 Lord Amherst resigned the Governorship-general and sailed for England. He was succeeded in July of the same year by Lord William Bentinck. This officer had been removed from the government of Madras in 1807 by the directors of the East India Company, who held him to be responsible for the mutiny at Vellore; and, feeling himself deeply aggrieved by this treatment, he was anxious to wipe off the stigma from his name by returning to India in the highest of all positions. He received his appointment in 1827 from Canning who, as we have seen, had courted alliance with the Whigs and doubtless was not averse from conciliating the house of Portland; and he was allowed to retain it by the generous forbearance of Wellington. The Duke, indeed, did not favour the distribution of great places according to the prejudices of party; and, since Bentinck had given him a good deal of trouble by his blunders in Spain, he would be the more anxious to show that he bore him no malice and was well content to see him elevated to high station.

A wiser man than Bentinck would have hesitated before accepting the place upon the terms imposed on him by the court of directors. The succession of costly wars conducted by the Indian government between 1814 and 1826 had involved it in financial difficulties which imperatively demanded economy; and it was natural and right that the court should

1828. prescribe reduction of the army and general diminution of military expenditure. But there was one detail of retrenchment which, to say the least, was of doubtful expediency. It had long been the practice to grant an allowance, known as *batta*, to officers of the army when serving in the field within the company's territories; which allowance was reduced to one-half when the officers were in cantonments and were furnished with quarters at the public expense. In 1801, however, the government of Bengal granted full *batta* at all times, and threw upon the officers themselves the burden of providing themselves with quarters. This arrangement had never been sanctioned by the directors; and in 1814 they instructed that government to revert to the original plan of granting half-*batta* only, within the old territory of the company in that presidency. Moira, realising that such a regulation would be a great hardship to officers and would provoke legitimate discontent among a body of men who were already none too well disciplined, refused to obey the court's orders and referred them back to it for reconsideration. He judged that the saving of a paltry £20,000 was not worth the risk of a possible mutiny. Amherst in his turn did likewise; and the directors, losing patience instead of learning wisdom, insisted that Bentinck must obey their commands as to half-*batta*, or resign. Being at the moment solicitous above all things for the vindication of his own good name, such as it was, Bentinck consented to obey; and on the 9th of November 1828, as one of his first measures of retrenchment, he issued the order which reduced the *batta* of officers by one-half.

He was obliged to do so mainly upon his own authority. Combermere, the Commander-in-chief, flatly refused to be a party to the order and resigned his office. The two civil members of the council only with the greatest reluctance assented to it lest they should seem to defy their superiors in Leadenhall

Street; and the abler of them, Sir Charles Metcalfe, recorded his opinion that the measure was unjust and unwise, and his consequent hope that the order might be rescinded. The regulation was at first made applicable to five stations only; but that was amply sufficient to raise a storm. As a matter of fact the officers were none too well paid even with full *batta*, and the halving of the allowance signified to them real privation and suffering. In high indignation they held meetings, passed resolutions and forwarded petitions to the Commander-in-chief and to the court of directors. The Sepoys, hearing of the reduction of their officers' pay, trembled lest the same misfortune should overtake them; and it seems to be no more than true that, if the officers had but lifted their fingers, the Bengal army would have risen to a man. There were indeed rash spirits who proposed to turn the feelings of the soldiers to account in order to put pressure upon the government, but they were at once overruled by the majority, who took their revenge in a different fashion. 1828–1834.

From the day when the order became known, the officers, to use an old phrase, sent the Governor-general to Coventry. If they saw him approaching, they turned out of the way to avoid him. If he entered the park, not an officer would go near it while he was there. If he gave a ball, not an officer would attend it. Even commanding officers agreed to decline his invitations to dinner; and one of them, questioned by Bentinck himself, flatly avowed the fact. All this, though superficially it might seem unimportant, was bad for discipline at large. Bentinck was greatly hurt. It seems that in his heart he loved the new regulation as little as any one, but that he felt himself bound to enforce it under the command of the directors. But no soldier who knew anything of soldiers would have pledged himself to do anything so foolish; for he would have divined that the mischief would not be limited to his own unpopularity. And it was not.

1828–1834. No sooner did the Sepoys learn that their officers only were to be mulcted than "they twirled their moustaches with pride, strutted about with a lordly, swaggering air and gave every indication that they had formed an overweening estimate of their own importance."[1] The directors, realising after a time that it was false economy to wreck the Bengal army for £20,000, forbore to extend their new regulation beyond the five stations first selected; but the evil in the ranks of the Sepoys had been already done past recall.

Bentinck then proceeded to aggravate it by abolishing the lash in the Indian native regiments, though it was still retained in the British service. This was a combination of two gross stupidities. In the first place, flogging was absolutely necessary for the preservation of discipline among the native soldiery, and the fact was proved by the revival of the punishment within a very few years. In the second place, the native troops, observing that they enjoyed an immunity which was not accorded to their British comrades, naturally inferred that they were a superior people, and in fact that they, and they alone, constituted the military force upon which depended the British dominion in India. If it ever occurred to them that, without their British officers, they were naught, they could banish the idea by reflecting that those officers were no longer of worth, since their own masters had lately reduced their pay. If Bentinck can be excused for his action in the affair of *batta* by the plea that he was acting under orders, no such defence can avail him over the question of flogging. Therein he showed himself to be not only no statesman, but also no soldier.

In regard to relations with native states, Bentinck tried hard to reconcile Barlow's system of abjuring all intervention in their affairs with Hastings's principle that order must be maintained among the neighbours on the British frontier. The result was not very

[1] Seaton, *From Cadet to Colonel*, i. 86.

happy. More than once he was obliged to interfere at last when he had better have done so at first, or contented himself with temporary adjustments which only laid up trouble for the future. 1828–1834.

The most serious of his interventions was the invasion of the territory of Coorg, on the west coast by the upper waters of the Cauvery, where the reigning Raja had been guilty of the vilest cruelty and oppression. The total force employed included three regiments of the King's Infantry, the Thirty-ninth, Forty-eighth and Fifty-fifth, and seven battalions of Madras Native Infantry, besides artillery, making a total of some six thousand men, under the command of Brigadier-general Lindesay of the Thirty-ninth, a veteran of the Peninsula. The country was wild, mountainous, forest-clad and pathless; and the main difficulties to be encountered were those of transport and supply. In the circumstances it was impossible to feed or to move any great number of men in a single body; so Lindesay distributed his force into four columns, which were to converge upon the capital, Mercara, from the north, east and west. The northern column, under Colonel Waugh, consisted of the Fifty-fifth, two Madras battalions, with artillery. The eastern column, which was commanded by Lindesay himself, was made up of the Thirty-ninth, two Madras battalions and artillery, and was based on Periyapatna; one western column, under Colonel Foulis, included part of the Forty-eighth and two Madras battalions with artillery, with its base at Cannanore; and an auxiliary western column, based on Mangalore, under Colonel Jackson, had a detachment of the Forty-eighth, one battalion of Madras Infantry, but no guns.

The whole of these columns crossed into the territory of Coorg on the 2nd of April 1834. One and all found themselves confronted by blind mountain-tracks, which were obstructed by felled trees, and defended by stockades. Waugh, being stopped by one such stockade, sent out parties to right and left to pass round it, unite

1828–1834. in rear of it and take it in reverse; but the two detachments, turning inward too soon, joined together in front, instead of in rear, of the enemy's position, and rushing forward to storm it were beaten back after four hours' fighting with a loss of over one hundred and sixty killed and wounded, one hundred of them belonging to the Fifty-fifth. Lindesay himself, who crossed the Cauvery at Hebhali, met with little opposition, and entered Mercara victorious on the 6th. It was a secondary column, detached from his own, under Colonel Stewart, which did such little fighting as was to be done on that side. Foulis joined touch with the enemy on the 2nd, spent the 3rd and the 4th fighting his way through the Heggala Ghat over innumerable felled trees, and finally cleared it after storming two stockades and two breastworks at a cost of about fifty casualties. Jackson, learning of a stockade five miles ahead of him, pushed forward forty of the Forty-eighth and about one hundred Sepoys to reconnoitre it, with the result that the party walked into an ambush, and was only extricated after the loss of half of its numbers killed and wounded. The entire campaign lasted just five days, and cost in all the lives of five British officers and about forty British soldiers, with a total casualty list of over two hundred killed and wounded.

It is difficult to pronounce judgement upon little affairs of this kind. The work seems to have been similar to that of the Nepali War, though the enemy, albeit possessed of both matchlocks and cannon, was far less formidable. The difficulties were very great, for the artillery could generally be brought forward only by man-handling, the paths being impracticable for bullocks; and the fatigue thus caused to the men was aggravated by intense heat. Bush-fighting, where troops must depend upon native guides, always timid and often treacherous, must always be a hazardous matter. None the less, both Waugh and Jackson were much blamed, and, it should seem rightly, seeing that Foulis succeeded against as formidable resistance as

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had caused their failure, with the loss of but fifty men. 1828–
Seniority too often in those days, and indeed many 1834.
years later, placed commands which called for real skill and professional knowledge, in the hands of men who were not to be trusted in charge of a corporal's guard.

In regard to the remoter powers in the north-west of India—the Sikhs, the Amirs of Sind and the Afghans—Bentinck, in consequence of the steady advance of Russia eastward, took more definite and significant measures. In 1826 war between Russia and Persia again broke out, and England found herself, under the treaty of 1812, bound to heal their differences or, in default, to supply Persia either with troops or money. Canning refused to furnish either men or cash, preferring to spend the amount of the covenanted subsidy in purchasing the erasure of these awkward stipulations from the treaty. British mediation, however, was forthcoming; and in 1828, Persia, having suffered many defeats, bought peace by the cession of further territory to Russia. Thenceforward British influence vanished from Tehran, and Persia became the tool of Russia. The Shah, naturally sore at seeing his western dominions shorn from him, conceived the idea that he might indemnify himself by encroaching upon his neighbours to eastward; and, as naturally, the Russians assured him that he could not do better. The arrangement did not promise peace on the north-western frontier of the British dominions.

Immediately to east of Persia lay Afghanistan, and eastward of her again Ranjit Singh and the Sikhs to north, and the Amirs of Sind to south. The relations of these three powers to each other and to the British were somewhat curious. In Afghanistan, since the flight of Shah Shuja, events had tended steadily towards the supplanting of his dynasty—that of the Sadozais—by the chiefs of the rival tribe of Barakzais. As these chiefs included a score of brothers, each of them jealous and distrustful of the others, the change

1828–1834. would have promised little improvement, had not one of them, Dost Mohamed, been a man of such clear intellect and strong character as to assure him ultimate pre-eminence. But, while the strife in Afghanistan continued, Ranjit Singh took the opportunity to snatch away Mooltan in 1818 and Kashmir in 1819, losses which could not but rankle deep in the hearts alike of Sadozais and Barakzais. Ranjit, still insatiable, then meditated a descent upon the delta of the Indus, but here, as shall presently be seen, he was anticipated by the British. By 1826 not only had the rule of the Sadozais been extinguished in Afghanistan, except at Herat, where one of them, Khamran by name, still held his own, but Dost Mohamed, after many contests with his brothers, had made over Kandahar to one of them—Kohan Dil Khan—and reigned himself supreme at Kabul. None but a very strong and fearless man can govern those lawless and turbulent tribes; and he must add to his strength a sense of duty and a rude justice administered with inflexible severity. Such a combination of qualities is not common, but they were certainly found in Dost Mohamed.

Looking to the alarming advance of Russia and to the hold which she had gained upon Persia, the supreme government of India conceived that the wise course would be to seek the friendship alike of Amirs, Afghans and Sikhs, and unite them, if possible, into a solid barrier against a Russian invasion from the west. Little was known about any of the three; and their jealousies and rivalries were such as promised to baffle the most skilful diplomacy. In the first place, the Amirs of Sind were nominally dependent upon the court of Kabul, and tributary to it; but they were anxious to throw off that dependence, and paid little tribute unless it were collected by an Afghan army. With Ranjit Singh they had had little to do; but he was firmly established at Mooltan and casting greedy eyes down the stream of the Indus. With the British they had, in 1820, renewed their original treaty of

amity and alliance; and it was not difficult to play upon their fears of a British agreement with Afghanistan and their hopes of British help for themselves against that country. By their friendship the most southerly outlet into India from the west—the Bolan pass—might well be secured; but they were extremely jealous of any proposals of the Calcutta government for opening the navigation of the Indus; and this was a matter which that government earnestly desired to accomplish. 1828–1834.

As to Afghanistan, the situation was more complicated still. The original treaty negotiated with Shah Shuja by the British mission of 1809 had fallen to naught with the expulsion of that potentate in 1810. After being despoiled of his jewels by Ranjit Singh, he had managed to escape from the overpowering attentions of his protector to British territory, and had long been living at Ludhiana upon a pension granted to him by the Indian government. He dreamed, however, continually of the recovery of his lost empire with the help of Ranjit Singh, with the help of the British government, with the help, in fact, of any one who for any consideration would replace him upon a throne which he was quite unfit to occupy. Ranjit Singh, who had already torn from his realm Kashmir and Mooltan, readily played with the poor creature's hopes, no doubt with the expectation of shearing away yet more of the Afghan dominions. There are no such dreamers as exiled princes; and it suited well the purposes of the crafty Sikh to have, as cat's-paw, so weak and foolish a dreamer as Shah Shuja.

As to the British sentiments towards Ranjit Singh himself, it seems hardly too much to say that the Calcutta government was heartily afraid of him. Nor, perhaps, was this altogether unnatural, for the Sikh chief was hardly less than a man of genius, and he had a formidable disciplined army under his hand. British India needed peace after the exhaustion of the

1828–1834. Nepalese, Pindari and Burmese campaigns. The Bengal army had been reduced as a consequence of that exhaustion; and if, as seemed surely to be the case, the Russians were meditating an invasion of India, it was far more convenient that the task of repelling them should fall upon Ranjit Singh than upon the British. As Palmerston had tried to palm off upon Spain the military duties of England, so the Calcutta government sought to some extent to palm off its military duties upon the Sikhs, the Amirs and the Afghans; and of the three the Sikhs were decidedly the most powerful. Looking to the fact that the British were not only the most formidable neighbours of Ranjit Singh but most anxious to cultivate his friendship, it was thought that there should be no great difficulty in gaining his help, and in averting any danger of his conquest of Sind.

There remained the problem of inducing Afghanistan to work with the Sikhs and the Amirs, which seemed not easy except upon one condition. The actual ruler of Afghanistan was an usurper, but nevertheless not likely to feel friendly towards the chief who had appropriated so much of his usurped kingdom. The legitimate ruler was a guest on British territory, who reposed his hopes of restoration mainly upon Ranjit Singh. Could he but be reinstated, and the usurper driven out, then, with a little tact and management, all differences between the three parties might be adjusted by a triple alliance, and an impassable barrier might be thrown up against the Russian armies. Such seem to have been the vague ideas, original or instilled into him by others, which possessed the imagination of Bentinck and were to be inherited from him by his successor. They were soon proved to rest upon false conceptions of fact, but, in default of better information, they were not in themselves absolutely unreasonable. Nevertheless it is curious that a Whig, who based all his political philosophy upon the glorious Revolution of 1688, should have

favoured a legitimate sovereign of tried incompetence as against an usurper of proved ability. 1828–1834.

However, in 1830 the first diplomatic step was taken. At the instance of Lord Ellenborough, President of the Board of Control, or in other words the chief director of Indian affairs in London, it was decided that a complimentary mission should be sent to Ranjit Singh, and that it should proceed to Lahore by water. The selected emissary was one Alexander Burnes, a young man of twenty-six, who having shown talent as a linguist and as a topographical draughtsman, had been transferred from military to political duties. Upon his entering the Indus he was stopped by the Amirs and forbidden to proceed further; but after protracted negotiation he was allowed to ascend the river to Hyderabad, and finally arrived at Lahore in July. Here he delivered a present of English horses to Ranjit Singh and was received by the old warrior with open arms. From Lahore he made his way to Ludhiana, where he met the exiled prince Shah Shuja, and thence to Simla, where Bentinck gave him leave to travel home overland. Starting at the beginning of 1832, Burnes travelled first by the Khyber pass to Kabul, where he was hospitably entertained by Dost Mohamed; and during his stay he realised that his host was a man able and worthy to rule the Afghans and that Shah Shuja was not. From Kabul he journeyed over the Hindu Kush to the Oxus, thence to Bokhara, Tehran and Bushire and so back to Bombay and Calcutta. Early in 1833 he made his report to Bentinck, and was sent home to lay his information before the authorities in England. There, for the present, let us leave him, much sought after in London society for all that he had seen and could tell of lands so far almost unknown.

Meanwhile, events began to move with greater rapidity. In October 1831 the Governor-general himself paid a visit to Ranjit Singh. The meeting took place at Rupar on the Sutlej, where a week was

1828–1834. passed in ceremonial visits and military evolutions, Bentinck having brought with him a wing of the Sixteenth Lancers, a troop of horse-artillery, two squadrons of native horse and the Thirty-first Foot; while Ranjit had for escort six thousand of his best infantry and ten thousand cavalry. The display was significant and so also was the time; for Shah Shuja, after many attempts, was on the point of concluding a negotiation with Ranjit Singh for his restoration to the throne of Kabul. Bentinck was aware of the conditions; and it is hardly possible that the Sikh chieftain should not have referred to the subject and at least have attempted to ascertain the Governor-general's views thereon; though it is not likely that Bentinck should have committed himself to any very definite expression of opinion. Certainly, when Shah Shuja asked him directly for aid, Bentinck refused to interfere in any way; but, whether he said so or not, Bentinck undoubtedly wished the fallen monarch success in his venture.

The next incident resulted immediately from Burnes's report upon the navigation of the Indus. In 1832 the East India Company presented to the Amirs of Sind the project of a treaty under which the river might be opened to the merchants and traders of Hindustan upon payment of fair and moderate duties. The Baluchi chieftains did not favour the proposal, which they regarded with suspicion, and only very reluctantly did they yield their consent to it, specially stipulating that in no case should military stores nor armed vessels enter the river. With true instinct they foresaw in the advent of the Europeans the passing of their own rule; but, with enemies on every side, they hoped by this concession at least to gain England for their friend. It is a curious complication in the whole of this intricate affair that the British rulers of India—at any rate in England—seem to have held access to the Indus more closely to their hearts than any other object, and that for commercial

purposes only, without any reference to the eastward advance of Russia. It is more than likely that this confusion of purposes led to confusion of thought and of policy. 1828–1834.

In January 1833 Shah Shuja, having obtained from the British four months' advance of the allowance granted to him by them, marched out of Ludhiana with a handful of followers, and moving slowly down the Sutlej and the Indus into Sind crossed the latter river to Shikarpur. By the time that he had arrived there, his army had swelled to thirty thousand men; and, as the Amirs had received him with friendship and furnished him with supplies, he was in no great haste to proceed to the Bolan pass. His exactions, however, became so intolerable that the Sindians rose against him, but, after defeat in a pitched battle in January 1834, were fain to submit. In due time, therefore, Shah Shuja continued his advance, and marching by the Bolan pass appeared in the early summer before Kandahar. He laid siege to the city, but, before he could master it, Dost Mohamed swept down upon him from Kabul in all his wrath, completely defeated him and drove him in hopeless flight from the country.

This, however, was only the beginning of Dost Mohamed's troubles. By his treaty with Ranjit Singh Shah Shuja had agreed to deliver to him, upon his restoration, the district of Peshawar. The wily old chief, however, being in no mood to wait for Shah Shuja's success, which probably he considered very doubtful, seized the moment while Dost Mohamed's hands were full to snatch away his prize by treachery without further ado. Furious with rage, Dost Mohamed proclaimed a holy war. The tribes flocked by thousands to his banner, and, when he came before Peshawar, even Ranjit Singh quailed before the aspect of the Afghan host. But, once again, the cunning Sikh set treachery to work; and in a few hours Dost Mohamed's army had melted away. Peshawar was

1835–1838. gone, gone, as it proved, for ever; and Dost Mohamed never forgot nor forgave the loss. Henceforward there could be no real peace between him and Ranjit Singh.

In the spring of 1835 Lord William Bentinck resigned the post of Governor-general and was succeeded in the autumn by Lord Auckland. The vacancy had occurred during the brief administration of Sir Robert Peel from December 1834 to April 1835; and Lord Heytesbury, a man who had proved his ability during a long and successful diplomatic career, had been chosen to fill it. But it would have done violence to all sentiment and tradition of the Whigs that so rich a piece of patronage should pass out of their hands, so Lord Heytesbury's appointment was unceremoniously cancelled, and the better man was displaced to make way for the worse. Not that there was grave fault to be found in Auckland. On the contrary, he was a quiet, modest, diligent, conscientious man, with every desire to do good in an unobtrusive way, and no passion to make himself a resplendent name. In brief, he was conscious of his own mediocrity, which was so far in his favour; and this consciousness, as often happens, had gained him the reputation of being what is called a "safe" man. Now a mediocre man, if he possess some measure of shrewdness, a sense of the ridiculous, and a certain degree of strength, may be trusted to ensure that description of "safety" which consists in placing present difficulties, so to speak, on deposit, to accumulate with compound interest for discharge by his successors. But Auckland, though a cultivated man, possessed little mother-wit, was painfully in earnest, and was both weak and irresolute. Being unmarried he was accompanied by his two sisters, ladies of unusual cleverness and accomplishments, but not on that account likely to be the wisest counsellors for an unambitious and hesitating man.

By an unfortunate coincidence it chanced that the Indian Civil Service was particularly rich at the

moment in what were termed brilliant young men. Such persons generally attained to that reputation in India by the mastery of a number of Oriental languages. To the ordinary European, who turns in despair from any script, other than Roman or Greek, such an accomplishment appears marvellous; and certainly it does imply at least diligence and mental gifts of a certain kind. In the Indian climate, moreover, the mere fact that a man entered upon any serious intellectual labour, except under compulsion, avouched activity of mind and strength of character. Yet experience shows that astonishing proficiency in Oriental tongues can be acquired by men who live among the speakers of those tongues, but who in other respects are not remarkable for intellect. In India, however, an accomplished linguist was sure of promotion, and no doubt rightly so, both in the administrative and the diplomatic service. The truth seems to be that any young man who possessed brains, lived steadily and was fond of work, was sure of advancement. Any youthful subaltern who chose to spend his leisure hours—and those hours were very many in cantonments — in the acquisition of a new language was caught up, taken away from his military duties for administrative or diplomatic business, and became what was called a " political ". If by chance he were sent to some country heretofore unvisited, he wrote a book about it and commenced author. If like, for instance, Alexander Burnes, he voluntarily accomplished some adventurous journey for purposes of intelligence and exploration, he might attain celebrity, not only in India but in London drawing-rooms. The field thus opened to enterprising young men was wide; and indeed it may be said that this period, when the consolidation of British power in the great peninsula was extending British interests westward to the Bosporus and the Nile and eastward to the Pacific Ocean, was the golden age of British youth in India. 1835–1838.

1835–1838. None the less, the system had its dangers. In the first place it was a very grave evil that military officers should be not merely taught but encouraged to look outside the military service for advancement. This signified that the army was robbed of its best and most promising men, and was left with those who preferred an idle and easy life. If the latter devoted their leisure to sport with rifle, gun or hog-spear, little harm was done, for there could be no better training for active service; but if they fell back upon alcohol and pursuit of their neighbours' wives, or even upon nothing worse than the petty jealousies and squabbles of life in cantonments, they could be nothing save unprofitable. In any case the elimination of all who might raise the standard of cultivation and encourage a zest for intellectual pursuits among the younger officers, was most mischievous. Moreover, the effect of their removal from the military sphere had a most pernicious effect upon these young "politicals" themselves. Distinguished above their fellow men in virtue of their linguistic gifts, often trusted, while yet immature, with a very large measure of independence whether for administrative or diplomatic duties, they readily formed an exaggerated estimate of their own ability and their own importance. The few really capable men in India were, from the nature of the case, scattered far and wide; and it was rare for them to meet their intellectual peers. Having never encountered any that they judged to be their intellectual superiors, they had a suspicion, sometimes amounting to a certainty, that such superiors did not exist. Among the British in India it is possible that they were supreme, and certainly they were honoured accordingly. Where, as about the head-quarters of government, a few of them were gathered together, they formed a select society, not lacking mutual admiration. Everywhere they were encouraged in the worst and, apparently, the incurable vice of Indian administration—copious and interminable writing of

minutes, memoranda and reports. There is no one with much experience of Indian official records who has not longed to summon the writers before him, tear the documents asunder before their faces, and bid them compress their wordy effusions into a quarter of their original compass. No training can be worse for what is called a clever man than to suffer his prolixity with patience. Yet in India it was suffered with gladness, nay more, was accepted as a measure of efficiency. Such was the result of a lack of intellectual competition extending over many generations. Truly has it been said that nowhere is a great reputation so easily made as in India. 1835–1838.

The group with which Auckland was chiefly concerned numbered three. The first was William Macnaghten, who had begun his service as a cadet in the Madras Cavalry in 1809, had become a civilian in Bengal five years later and by 1833 had risen to be the head of the "Secret and Political Department," that is to say of the department of Foreign Affairs, and later Chief Secretary to the government. He had a profound knowledge of Oriental languages and customs, with a considerable experience of administration, as carried out in India, and was an able and industrious public servant. The second was Henry Torrens, son of the Duke of York's military secretary, and himself at the outset a soldier who had keenly studied his profession. He was a more brilliant variety of Macnaghten, familiar with many tongues both European and Oriental, and possessed further a taste for letters, a quick intelligence and a dangerously facile pen. "The airy grace," we are told, "with which he could throw off a French canzonet, was something as perfect in its kind as the military genius with which he could sketch out the plan of a campaign, or the official pomp with which he could inflate a state-paper."[1] The bare fact that such a sentence could be written of him by an Indian civil servant of

[1] Kaye, i. 303.

1835–1838. no small reputation reveals the impression made by Torrens upon his fellows, who certainly were poor judges of a plan of campaign and probably possessed small acquaintance with the rules of French prosody. Such a man, full of vivacity and of miscellaneous information, would be a welcome addition to any government house, and might, if closely watched and tightly curbed, be an exceedingly valuable public servant. But he would need a chief of hard prosaic common sense, who would throw the canzonets into the waste-basket and incarcerate the effusions of military genius in those official dungeons from which there is no delivery except into the fire.

The third was John Colvin, a familiar name in the history of British India, who was Auckland's private secretary and official adviser. With less shining outward accomplishments than the other two, he possessed a stronger will and a sounder understanding. Though both loyal and patriotic, he nourished the ambition to guide and control with an unseen hand the policy and the actions of his chief; and he was troubled by no misgivings as to his competence for so high a task. Altogether each of the three would, in the hands of a wise, strong man, have made an excellent servant; but not one was qualified to be, what each felt sure that he should be, a master.

When Auckland reached India affairs in Persia had reached a very critical stage. The Shah, Futteh Ali, always the friend of England, died in the autumn of 1834; and with the cordial assent both of the Russian and of the British governments, his son Mohamed Shah reigned in his stead. Palmerston promptly sent a mission to congratulate the new monarch, and took occasion to warn him against allowing himself to be pushed into war against the Afghans. But such a war was precisely the measure upon which Mohamed Shah, under Russian advice, was intent, that he might indemnify himself in the east for losses in the west. Indeed, he had actually

led an army to Herat and besieged it in 1833, but had been obliged to abandon the enterprise owing to internal troubles in Persia. He now announced that he claimed not only Herat, but Kandahar and even Ghazni, and that he would shortly set an army in motion to assert his right by force. The British Minister at Tehran offered to mediate between the incensed potentate and the ruler of Herat, but in vain; and he then bethought him that the wisest course would be to anticipate the designs of Persia in Afghanistan by sending a mission to Dost Mohamed at Kabul, and offering him the use of British officers to train the Afghan army. 1835–1838.

In Calcutta likewise the eyes of the government were already turned to the north-west; and it was considered advisable at least to gain some information of the countries through which Russia must pass if she intended to invade India. In the spring of 1836 Dost Mohamed addressed to Auckland a letter of congratulation upon his assumption of the Governorship-general, wherein he took occasion to complain of his own ill-treatment by the Sikhs and to beg, in a complimentary fashion, for Auckland's advice. The Governor-general sent a becoming answer of goodwill, and expressed his hope that Dost Mohamed might be in favour of promoting the navigation of the Indus. He hinted that he might shortly send a mission to Kabul to discuss certain commercial topics, and, referring to the Sikhs, made the old declaration that it was not the habit of the British to interfere in the affairs of her independent neighbours. It is not quite clear how this admirable sentiment could be reconciled with the navigation of the Indus, nor how Dost Mohamed could be concerned with that matter, except as the nominal suzerain of the Amirs of Sind, with whom the British had concluded an alliance, or as the rightful owner of Mooltan and Peshawar, which had been wrested from the Afghan empire by the Sikhs. Auckland's prime mistake seems to have

1835–1838. been that he regarded the navigation of the Indus as a matter which could be arranged by diplomacy, whereas it could only have been permanently settled by actual, or threatened, force of arms. Some at least of his council seem to have realised this, and one of the most sagacious among them, Sir Charles Metcalfe, protested from the first against all of Auckland's measures with respect to the trade on that river.[1] As a matter of fact, we found ourselves within ten years engaged in desperate conflict with Afghans, Baluchis and Sikhs. If Auckland had seen his way more clearly he might, indeed, have been dragged into war with Baluchis and Sikhs, but need not have become entangled with the Afghans. If the Sikhs had been in the delta of the Indus instead of three hundred miles from it, there would have been far less talk about the navigation.

However, it was decided in the autumn to despatch a commercial mission to Kabul; and Alexander Burnes, who in the autumn of 1835 had been sent to the court of the Amirs of Sind, was selected to be the envoy. He had been very successful in Sind, had gained the consent of the Amirs to a survey of the river, and could readily have made the British alliance with them more intimate, if the supreme government had been willing to take such a step. He sailed from Bombay for the Indus at the end of November, renewed his friendly but vague parleys with the Amirs, by whom he was hospitably received, and passed slowly and deviously five hundred miles up the river to Dera Ghazi Khan, where he heard important news. In the spring of 1837, Dost Mohamed had sent an army through the Khyber pass to lay siege to Jamrud, just at the mouth of the pass; and this force had defeated an army of Sikhs which had marched to the relief of the fort. The Afghan commander, in the first flush of success, spoke of a dash upon Peshawar; but the Sikhs soon reappeared in such strength that

[1] Kaye, i. 363.

the Afghans were fain to retreat within their mountains. 1835–
But they were full of exultation over their victory; 1838.
and Ranjit Singh, one of whose dearest friends and best officers had fallen in the fight, never forgave Dost Mohamed for his loss.

Proceeding to Peshawar, Burnes was hospitably received by General Avitabile, an Italian in Ranjit Singh's service; and thence, passing through the still unburied dead at Jamrud, he entered the Khyber pass. Friendly messages from Dost Mohamed met him as he journeyed; and on the 20th of September he was escorted with great pomp and splendour into Kabul, where the best accommodation had been prepared for the mission. Whatever his ostensible object, the envoy soon forsook commercial for political topics, and in no long time satisfied himself that Dost Mohamed honestly and whole-heartedly desired an alliance with the British and would have nothing to do with any other power. Within two months of his arrival, Mohamed Shah fulfilled his long-standing threats; and on the 23rd of November a Persian army, equipped with powerful artillery and, in part, directed by Russian officers, laid siege to Herat. This fortress, it must be repeated, was the one fragment of the Afghan empire which remained under the control of a Sadozai chieftain, Khamran; and on this account the heads of the Barakzais, with one exception, applauded rather than otherwise the Persian menace to Herat. They had a blood feud with Khamran; they yearned to see the extinction of the last remnant of Sadozai dominion, and they hoped to see the principality of Herat transferred to themselves. Hence it was that Kohan Dil Khan of Kandahar, against the advice of his brother, Dost Mohamed, had sent one of his sons to the Persian camp to welcome the invaders. For this action Kohan Dil Khan received warm commendation from the Russian agents who accompanied Mohamed Shah; but Dost Mohamed remained unmoved; and, even before the Persian host came before

1835–1838. Herat, he offered, if Burnes approved it, to march an army against his brother. Burnes discountenanced any such measure, but he seconded Dost Mohamed's remonstrances with such effect that Kohan Dil Khan dismissed the Persian emissaries, and declared himself eager to act according to the advice of his brother and of the British government. Burnes replied, pledging himself to repair to Kandahar in person together with Dost Mohamed if the Persians should threaten that city, and even to pay the troops of Kohan Dil Khan. He sent, moreover, one of his officers to Kandahar to guard against the intrigues of the Persians and to give him the earliest information of their movements.

Herein, as was proved by later events, Burnes served his country well. It was no common good fortune to find so genuine a friend in the ruler at Kabul, particularly when that ruler was one of those rare strong men who really could control his turbulent and ungovernable subjects. Yet Dost Mohamed's inclinations towards the British were easily explained. Russian rule in Georgia had been calculated to alienate all good Mussulmans, and the demeanour of the Russians towards the conquered was the reverse of conciliating. Dost Mohamed's shrewdness may also have remarked that the Russians are essentially Orientals, more congenial in temperament than the Anglo-Saxons, but less thorough, less trustworthy, less stable to lean upon. Be that as it may, he was not only ready but eager to work with the British; and Burnes, with true insight, recognised that such a friend at Kabul would be of priceless value, and, moreover, could be gained at little cost. Peshawar was always the sore point with Dost Mohamed; and, if the Calcutta government would consent to mediate with the Sikhs for its restoration, even if not on the most favourable terms, he would be won to the British side for ever. Burnes, having no powers to pledge his government to any such course, could only urge

the point strongly upon Auckland and await his instructions. 1835–1838.

Meanwhile, towards the end of December a rival negotiator, likewise concerned ostensibly with commerce only, arrived at Kabul in the person of a Russian officer, Captain Witkewitch. Upon hearing of his coming to Ghazni, Dost Mohamed at once approached Burnes, repeated that he wished to have no dealings with any power but the British, and declared his readiness either to delay Witkewitch on the road, or to turn him straight out of the country. Upon Burnes's advice the Russian envoy was permitted to enter the capital; but Dost Mohamed refused to admit him to more than a single formal audience and declined to notice any of his communications. So matters went 1838. on until the end of January 1838, when at last the Governor-general's answer came to Burnes's hand. Auckland, who was on his way to Simla with Macnaghten, Torrens and Colvin, and without the members of his council, declined to mediate between Dost Mohamed and Ranjit Singh, censured Burnes for promising assistance to the Barakzai chiefs at Kandahar, and ordered him to revoke his pledges and to undeceive all parties. The fair structure which Burnes had reared, and which was awaiting only the coping stone, was shattered at a blow.

There was nothing left to the envoy but loyally to commend to Dost Mohamed advice which he thought wrong, and professions which he knew to be vain. Yet still for another month the Amir showed marked coldness to Witkewitch, and did his utmost to obtain some indication of warmth from the government of India; but Burnes, fettered by his instructions, could give none. Then came the turn of Witkewitch. He now received favourable audience and was publicly paraded as the friend of the Amir, for he was ready to promise all that Auckland had denied. On the 26th of April, Burnes, with a heavy heart, left Kabul, and not long afterwards Witkewitch departed for Herat.

1838. He had already engaged himself to mediate with Ranjit Singh, and he was now to undertake to pay subsidies to Kohan Dil Khan. He, no less than Burnes, had served his country well, and foresaw not the bitterness of his coming reward.

Meanwhile, the siege of Herat was not going well for the Persians. It chanced that Lieutenant Eldred Pottinger of the Bombay Artillery had been sent by his uncle, then Resident in Sind, to gather, unofficially, information concerning Afghanistan. Disguised as a horse-dealer from Kach, he had made his way first to Kabul and then to Herat, where, after a time, he practically took charge of the defence. The operations of the Persians were feeble, but they violated the treaty under which Persia had pledged herself not to attack Afghanistan; and on the 6th of April the British Resident at Tehran, Mr. McNeill, presented himself in Shah Mohamed's camp and endeavoured to mediate between the contending parties. But at the end of the month a Russian envoy from the Tsar likewise arrived in the camp, with officers who instructed the Persians in the raising of their batteries, and with money, which was freely distributed among the Persian soldiers. This was fatal to the influence of McNeill, who, after suffering more than one insult without redress, on the 7th of June broke off diplomatic relations with the Shah, and took his departure. Still Herat held out; but meanwhile, Palmerston at home and Auckland in India were losing patience. It was not at Herat only, but at Bushire also that a British Resident had been disrespectfully treated by the Persian authorities; and in May Auckland despatched a small naval and military expedition to the island of Karak, a little to north of Bushire, in the Persian Gulf. The squadron reached its destination on the 19th of June; the troops—detachments of Bombay native regiments—were landed, without opposition, and Karak was peacefully surrendered. Five days later, on the 24th of June, the most formidable assault upon the walls of Herat was de-

livered, and, mainly through the energy and example of Eldred Pottinger, was repulsed. Mr. McNeill judged the moment favourable for a second summons to Mohamed Shah to withdraw the Persian army from before Herat. Rumour had magnified the strength and prowess of the expedition to Karak; and on the 9th of September Mohamed Shah raised the siege and marched back to his own place. The leaguer had lasted for ten months, and after all, despite of Russian generals and Russian engineers, had failed ignominiously. A British army would, in Pottinger's judgement, have mastered the fortress within ten days. Nesselrode, as has been told, disclaimed all responsibility for the Persian enterprise and drove Witkewitch to suicide. Whether Herat were taken, or whether, as the result of British intervention, England ceased to be on good terms with Persia, Russia was bound to reap advantage; and so far she was content. But to the Afghan chiefs the fact that the Persian army, with what seemed to be all the might of Russia at its back, had retreated at the bidding of Great Britain, could teach but one lesson. 1838.

It remained to be seen whether the supreme government of India would turn the situation to good account. The vague report of a mighty host advancing from beyond the great mountains had created unrest among all classes in India. The Mohammedans interpreted it as an army of the faithful moving towards the extirpation of all infidels in the plains; and on the frontier to north and north-east, Nepal and Burma, still sore from their recent chastisement, muttered menaces of their vengeance to come. In the face of such perils something must be done; and the obvious expedient was to maintain the independence of Afghanistan and cultivate friendship and alliance with its rulers. But the policy of the British so far had been amazingly contradictory. In any case it was certain that, against the advice of Burnes, and not of Burnes only but of McNeill and of Captain Wade, the agent on the north-

1838. west frontier, the principal chiefs, Kohan Dil Khan and Dost Mohamed, had been either encouraged or forced to throw themselves into the arms of Persia, while at the same time Herat had been defended principally by a British officer—acting, it is true, without authority—and had been saved by the actual movement of a British expedition against a Persian possession. The explanation of this wild behaviour is doubtless to be found in imperfect understanding between Downing Street and Calcutta, accentuated by the fact that Downing Street signified the resolution and high language of Palmerston, and Calcutta the halting caution and weakness of Auckland. Still, the close of events at Herat seems to have offered a chance for a reversal of former policy, of overtures to Dost Mohamed, and of an effort to make the various chiefs lay aside their jealousies for the moment, and look for help in their troubles and their quarrels to the might and arbitrament of Britain.

But it was not to be. While the siege of Herat was yet going forward and its fall seemed to be inevitable, Auckland was bound to devise some course of action, and could think of nothing better than to follow the line indicated by his predecessor. Bentinck, who, to do him justice, had never seen the reports sent by Burnes during his mission at Kabul, had tacitly favoured Shah Shuja's efforts to regain his kingdom with the help of Ranjit Singh. This was in reality no more than an attempt on the part of the Indian government to secure its desires through the agency of other parties, but was not likely upon that account to be the less favoured by Auckland. Nevertheless, he guessed that a repetition of the experiment of 1833 might be unacceptable to Ranjit Singh without the moral support of the British; and that moral support he was now disposed to offer, if necessary, in the shape not only of pecuniary subsidies, but of the concentration of a British division at Shikarpur, off the eastern outlet of the Bolan pass. When he came to this decision he was at Simla, with

no counsellors but Macnaghten, Torrens and Colvin; 1838.
and it seems to have been the last named who was principally responsible for the political side of it; military considerations being dealt with by the great strategist, Torrens. Thus at the end of May instructions were drawn up, and with these Macnaghten set out on a mission to Ranjit Singh.

The envoy was warmly received by the old Sikh chieftain, and proceeded to unfold his proposals. The first was that Ranjit Singh should act independently, as in 1833, in aiding Shah Shuja to recover his throne; and this, Macnaghten represented, was the course commended by Lord Auckland. Ranjit Singh declined even to listen to it. Then Macnaghten put forward the alternative, that the Indian government should become a party to the treaty between Ranjit and Shah Shuja, help the latter with money and with British officers to lead his soldiers, and possibly send troops to the Indus to repel any possible aggression in that quarter. He even went so far as to recommend that the Sikhs should invade Afghanistan by the Khyber pass, moving on Kabul, while the Shah should take the route on Kandahar. This proposal Ranjit Singh accepted with avidity; but three anxious weeks were spent in haggling over the details of the agreement, each party being nervously anxious lest it should be saddled with the brunt of the work and denied its full share of the reward. At length, on the 26th of June, there was signed a treaty, commonly known as the tripartite treaty, between Ranjit Singh and Shah Shuja, with the approbation and under the guarantee of the Indian government. The principal points of this covenant were that Ranjit Singh should retain all the territory which he had already wrested from the Afghan dominions; that, if he assisted Shah Shuja with an auxiliary force, the Sikhs should receive one-half of the booty taken from the Barakzais; and that Shah Shuja, after the recovery of his kingdom, should pay Ranjit Singh two lakhs of rupees annually,

1838. the punctual discharge of which was guaranteed by the Indian government. The next step was to obtain the concurrence of Shah Shuja with the pledges that had been given in his name. With some reluctance, for he relished neither the cession of Peshawar nor the promise of the two lakhs of rupees, the exiled potentate, in the middle of July, signed the treaty; and the business was concluded. General Avitabile, when he perused the document, declared that it must have been dictated by Ranjit Singh; and the comment was by no means unreasonable.

The next step was to determine the action that should follow upon the treaty. Torrens, as military adviser, urged, unquestionably with good sense, that, if the expedition were left to Shah Shuja and Ranjit Singh alone, it was bound to fail. The Sadozai prince possessed neither strength nor ability; and, in Afghanistan itself, his name was associated with perpetual misfortune. The Sikhs, on the other side, were not only detested in Afghanistan but unwilling to enter it, having an almost superstitious dread of venturing within the Khyber pass. The more the question was studied, the more plainly it became manifest that the work could not be done at all unless the British took a hand in it. No great insight was needed to perceive that a British division, immovable and passive at Shikarpur, would be of no real support to Shah Shuja in advancing over the three to four hundred miles that separated that place from Kandahar. It was, therefore, suggested that two or three British regiments would suffice to escort the restored monarch into the recesses of his former dominions. This mad project was likewise abandoned; and now the Commander-in-chief, Sir Henry Fane, arrived at Simla, and insisted, first, that if the British interfered at all it should be with such a force as must assure success, and secondly, that it was for himself to determine the strength of that force. Had Auckland then and there decided to abstain from intervention, it is not likely that Fane

would have gainsaid him. But it must be remembered 1838.
that the prospect at Herat was then as gloomy as ever. Something must be done; and there was no one except the British prepared to do it. Auckland yielded to Fane; and on the 3rd of August orders were sent out to sundry regiments, both in Bengal and Bombay, to prepare for active service.

On the 10th of September, Auckland directed the formation of an army for an expedition into Afghanistan. On the 13th Fane published an order for the organisation of the Bengal army into brigades and divisions, and for its concentration at Kurnal, about eighty miles north of Delhi; and on the 1st of October Auckland issued a declaration of the motives which had led him to intervene by force of arms in the affairs of Afghanistan. These were set forth to be that Dost Mohamed had, without provocation, attacked Ranjit Singh, and that he had leagued himself with the Persians when they laid siege to Herat; the true facts being that Ranjit Singh had made an unprovoked seizure of Peshawar, which Dost Mohamed had tried to regain, and that Dost Mohamed had only joined the Persians, because Auckland, rejecting his friendly overture to himself, had literally forced him into Persia's arms. These disingenuous details, however, were of small importance. The main reason for the enterprise was avowed to be the Persian attack upon Herat; and, not many days after the declaration had been published, came news that the siege of Herat had been raised and that the Persians had retreated. All pretext for war, therefore, seemed to have vanished; and the troops, in bitter disappointment, were the first to recognise the fact. Auckland had given no engagement to send a single soldier beyond the Indus. The immediate danger was past, and Shah Shuja and Ranjit Singh might be left to work out their plans unaided. It was practically certain that, abandoned to their own devices, they would do nothing; and the cause for all immediate action had disappeared. Moreover,

1838. British might and ascendancy were plainly recognised when Persia, at the bidding of McNeill, had forfeited the labour and losses of ten months and withdrawn her armies from before Herat; and a mission to Kabul and Kandahar would almost certainly rally the Barakzai chiefs to the standard of Britain. Nothing could have fallen out more happily to save the government of India from the embarrassments raised by fate and its own blunders.

Yet, to the general surprise, Auckland, the timid, the cautious, the irresolute, on the 8th of November made proclamation that though Herat was now safe, the expedition was still to go forward, "with the view to the substitution of a friendly for a hostile power in the Eastern province of Afghanistan, and to the establishment of a permanent barrier against schemes of aggression upon our north-west frontier." Practically, the proclamation signified that the Barakzais had ceased to reign, and that the exiled Sadozai, Shah Shuja, was to replace them. Could the appointed end of a permanent barrier against Russia have been assured by this expedient, it might have been justified, no matter how hardly the process might bear upon individuals; and the object would have been worth great sacrifices. But there was no security for anything of the kind. The experiment was, in fact, far more hazardous than that of displacing a Napoleon to restore a Bourbon in France. The Bourbons, if they had possessed some small allowance of common sense, might possibly have endured, for they had at least centuries of use and wont behind them. But one who is to rule Afghanistan must be above all things a strong man, and such men are hard to find; even more, a succession of such men. Dost Mohamed, if Auckland had taken the advice of Burnes, might have fulfilled the British aspirations towards a permanent barrier in Afghanistan during his life-time—perhaps for twenty years—after which the chances were in favour of a disputed succession and a period

of anarchy. But to impose a man known to be feeble, such as Shah Shuja, upon the Afghans, was to court trouble. The British must either uphold him with their own bayonets, or submit to see him cast out. Yet this was the course chosen by Auckland, notwithstanding the military objections of the Commander-in-Chief, at the dictation of three men who abounded in cleverness, but had not found wisdom. 1838.

CHAPTER XXIII

1838. Auckland and his advisers now looked forward to the invasion of Afghanistan as a mere military promenade; and the "politicals" rejoiced in the prospect of conducting a harmless military operation. The Governor-general wrote to Fane that Shah Shuja's force would lead the way, that the Bengal army would follow in rear, and that the reception of both would be "welcome with general gladness." "I do not think," wrote Fane with respectful sarcasm, "that for this, my service is needed; and I consider Sir Willoughby Cotton quite competent to command. . . . I think, too, that your instructions to Sir William Macnaghten and to me are such as an officer of my rank could hardly submit to serve under."[1] Fane had the better reason for renouncing the chief command since, in the change of circumstances, it had been decided that one only of the two divisions assembled at Ferozepore should advance, and that the other should stand fast, occupying that place and Ludhiana. Sir Willoughby Cotton was accordingly placed in charge of the division that was to cross the Indus, and the supreme command was reserved for Sir John Keane, who was to accompany the contingent from Bombay. Keane, however, even as Fane, had his misgivings. If the march to Kandahar was to be a mere military promenade, all might be well; but if it should prove otherwise, then the proportion of British soldiers in the force was small. "Without any reflection upon the native troops," he wrote, "it

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 1 of 1839, Fane to Auckland, Nov. 2, 1839.

remains to be seen how they will stand the fatigues and privations of a distant enterprise in a severe climate against a resolute and hardy race." [1] Such warnings were thrown away upon Auckland and Macnaghten, the latter of whom had all the "political's" love of parading his authority with the pomp of a military demonstration. 1838.

Meanwhile Henry Pottinger, whose mission it was to make the British policy acceptable to the Amirs of Hyderabad, had discovered at once that the entry of the British troops into Sind was to the last degree distasteful to them. Auckland had instructed him to displace any of them that might show unwillingness; and in fact, on the 18th of October, Pottinger, having been publicly insulted and stoned by the populace, called upon the government of Bombay to embark at once the five thousand men that were held ready to sail to the mouth of the Indus. But, until these arrived, it was of the utmost importance to keep secret the intentions of the Indian government. For to provoke the immediate hostility of the Amirs would be to neutralise the efforts of the political agents towards collecting supplies and transport for the expedition in its passage through Sind. Auckland, however, had no notion of patience or conciliation in dealing with parties who seemed to be so weak as the Amirs. It was important to secure the fort of Bukkur on the Indus, over against Shikarpur, as the spot where a bridge could most easily be thrown over the river; and Burnes was despatched to the Amir of Khairpur in Upper Sind to negotiate for the cession of the fort. He arrived at Khairpur on that same 18th of October, found the Amir, Mir Rustam, who had heard of the retreat of the Persians from Herat, in a very complaisant mood, rushed to the conclusion that Mir Rustam was not acting in concert with the Amirs of Hyderabad, and hastened to bind him, as he hoped, to the British cause by a separate treaty. Pottinger, who knew that Mir Rustam was

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 1 of 1838, Keane's minute of Oct. 15, 1838.

1838. very unwilling to cede Bukkur, disapproved of this treaty as premature, and implored Burnes to be very wary in his negotiations with Mir Rustam, lest the Amirs of Hyderabad should get wind of them, and, realising the intentions of the Indian government to pass troops through their territory at any cost, should at once take measures of active enmity. By a singular coincidence, on the very day when Pottinger was writing these instructions, Auckland, likewise, was writing direct to Burnes, empowering him to enter into a separate agreement with Mir Rustam. Thus, there was on one side Pottinger, the man on the spot, trembling for the wreck of the whole expedition if the Amirs should be prematurely exasperated, and doing his utmost to stave off such a catastrophe; and on the other side the Governor-general, hundreds of miles away, knowing nothing of the circumstances and supremely ignorant of all military matters, giving instructions to one of Pottinger's subordinates which were calculated to undermine Pottinger's authority, and to hasten the very misfortune which Pottinger was striving to avert.

Nov. On the 27th of November the first transports from Bombay reached the mouth of the Indus, and by the 30th the whole of the Bombay division, about fifty-six hundred strong under Major-general Willshire, was at anchor in the river.[1] Some of the vessels had been towed by a steamer of seven hundred and fifty tons' burden with engines of one hundred and fifty horse-power, which, with three craft of one kind or another in tow, had made the creditable speed of nearly five

[1] *Cavalry.* 2 squadrons 4th Light Dragoons.
1st Bombay Light Cavalry.
Poona Local Horse.
Artillery. 2 troops Horse Artillery.
1 Field battery.
Infantry. H.M. 2nd Queen's.
H.M. 17th Foot.
19th Bombay N.I.
Bombay Sappers and Miners.

knots an hour. Sir John Keane and his personal staff took their passage upon this steamer, which contained no other troops, while in the first vessel astern of her —a gun-brig of one hundred and seventy-five tons— were packed the principal medical officer and three more doctors, with servants and camp-followers, which, added to the numbers of the officers and crew, made up a total of one hundred and ninety-one souls. Contrary to the advice of Burnes, the armament made, not for Karachi, but for the Hajamro Creek, some seventy miles to south of it, where the vessels waited, some of them for a full week, in idleness, until the transport-agent arrived on the 30th. The disembarkation, which had so far been conducted fitfully according to the caprice of merchant-skippers or the urgency of commanding officers, was then at last taken seriously in hand. A camp was marked out; and by the 3rd of December matters were so far advanced that Keane left the steamer and took up his quarters ashore. 1838. Nov. Dec.

The general had been informed that the troops were to land with the concurrence of the Sind government, and that he was to consider himself in a friendly country. As a matter of fact, the Sindians had celebrated the arrival of the transports by firing a cannon-shot over Pottinger's tent; and the news that Pottinger had to give was not reassuring. No grain, no boats and no camels had been collected, and the Amirs had done their best by intimidation to deter owners of camels and boatmen from engaging themselves to serve the British. The Amirs of Hyderabad had further ordered the Baluchi army to assemble at that city, and were endeavouring to persuade the Amir of Khairpur to join them in open war against the invaders. Keane was, in fact, in precisely the same situation as had been Archibald Campbell when he landed at Rangoon, absolutely powerless to move for want of transport and supplies. He was fain to pitch his camp at Vikkur and sit still, sending a member of his staff, Captain

1838. Dec. James Outram, by sea to Kach in the hope of procuring camels from that quarter.

In the meanwhile Pottinger was more than ever anxious to keep the Amirs quiet, with the greater cause since, owing to the indiscretion of Burnes, they had discovered the negotiations that were going forward at Khairpur, and were increasingly suspicious. He therefore wrote to Burnes emphasising the importance of keeping the government's intentions still secret for a time, until Keane should be in a position to move and the Bengal army should have approached the borders of Sind. But Auckland had in the interim granted Burnes independent powers to act at Khairpur without reference to affairs in Lower Sind; and Burnes was far too ambitious, conceited and short-sighted not to avail himself of his authority. He therefore tendered an ultimatum to the Amirs of Upper Sind, pointed out that the terms were more favourable than would be offered to their brothers at Hyderabad, and threatened that he would leave the country if they were refused. Evidently Burnes wished to subdue the Sindians by force of arms before entering Afghanistan, and from a purely military standpoint he was perhaps right; for the conquest of Sind would have helped to make the British communications secure. But this was very far from the desire of the Indian government, which contemplated a military promenade into Afghanistan and not a campaign in Sind; and, in any case, it was criminal to exasperate the Sindians into war while Keane lay helpless in the delta of the Indus. The Baluchis might not be very formidable against a mobile British force, but against five thousand isolated men, ill-provisioned, tied to the ground on which they lay, and subject to a blazing sun, endless clouds of dust and all the sickness incident to a tropical climate, they might by harassing tactics first weaken Keane, and finally overwhelm him. As to the action of Auckland in thus setting up rival agents to tear each other's diplomatic work to pieces, it may be regarded, according to the reader's estimate

of the man, with pity or with contempt; but it cannot escape damnation. 1838. Dec.

On the 10th of December Outram returned to report the success of his mission to Kach and the further discoveries that he had made on his journey. In the course of his return he had sailed to Karachi, then an obscure fishing village, spied out the land, sounded the disposition of the inhabitants, done a good stroke of work for the transport of the army, and finally returned overland, travelling ninety-five miles on camel-back in twenty-seven hours. But the camels from Kach arrived not until the 19th, having been compelled by the hostile action of the Amir of Mirpur to fetch a compass round his territory. On that day Pottinger, after consultation with Keane, wrote to summon from Bombay to Karachi the reserve troops which, besides Willshire's division, had been prepared for service; for it was very evident that, even if the Amirs should ultimately consent to allow Keane's force to pass quietly through their country, its base and communications could not be left unprotected. At last, on Christmas Eve, Keane was able to make his first movement northward, having during his stay at Vikkur buried one officer and eight privates. At the close of the march on Christmas Day cholera made its appearance, but vanished again on the 29th after claiming no more than eight victims. On the 27th the force reached Tatta, where Keane, despite of the protests of his chief medical officer,[1] marked out cantonments for a permanent garrison, and came to a halt. He was now in a better position to obtain supplies from the surrounding country, to watch the proceedings of the Amirs, and to await, with safety to his communications, the arrival of the reserve from Bombay and the nearer approach of the Bengal army. To the movements of that Bengal army it is now necessary to return.

By the 28th of November, the date fixed originally by Fane, the two divisions of Bengal troops had been

[1] Kennedy, i. 83.

1838. Dec. duly assembled at Ferozepore, together with the six thousand half-disciplined men who had been raised, under British officers, in Hindustan for the service of Shah Shuja. With very doubtful wisdom, Fane had decided that the choice of regiments to proceed on the expedition should be determined by lot, and thus the Thirteenth, a weak regiment, was preferred to the Buffs, which were a particularly fine battalion.[1] The halt of the Second Division at Ferozepore was, however, in one sense a fortunate circumstance, for it did provide some small, though inadequate, protection of the base of operations against the Sikh army, forty thousand strong, which, under the orders of so doubtful an ally as Ranjit Singh and only four marches from Ferozepore, might at any moment turn against the British. And it must be pointed out that the nearest supports which could have been collected to reinforce this corps of observation, could have found no point of assembly less than two hundred and fifty miles from Ferozepore. Moreover, the Commander-in-chief was left with very insufficient troops to guard his line of

[1] FIELD FORCE (Maj.-gen. Sir Willoughby Cotton)—

Cavalry Brigade (Maj.-gen. Thackwell):
- H.M. 16th Lancers.
- 2nd Bengal Light Cavalry.
- 6th „ „ „
- 4th Local Horse.

Artillery:
- 1 troop Horse Artillery.
- 2 batteries Field Artillery.
- 4 eighteen-pounder siege-guns.

Infantry:

1st Brigade (Col. Sale):
- H.M. 13th L.I.
- 16th Bengal N.I.
- 48th „ „

2nd Brigade (Maj.-gen. Nott):
- 31st Bengal N.I.
- 42nd „ „
- 43rd „ „

Reserve Force at Ferozepore (Maj.-gen. Duncan):

Cavalry:
- Skinner's Horse.

Artillery:
- 1 troop Horse Artillery.
- 1 battery Field Artillery.

Infantry:

3rd Brigade
- H.M. Buffs.
- 2nd Bengal N.I.
- 27th „ „

5th Brigade
- 5th Bengal N.I.
- 20th „ „
- 53rd „ „

communications. Cotton's task in the first instance was to march and effect a junction with the Bombay division in the delta of the Indus, seven hundred and eighty miles away. Of that distance the first two hundred miles lay wholly at the mercy of the Sikhs; then for a short distance came the friendly territory of Bahawalpur, and then Sind, which, if it were not hostile, had every reason to become so. Assuming that the Bombay division could advance as far as Shikarpur to meet the Bengal troops, then, roughly speaking, the former would have three hundred miles and the latter five hundred miles to guard, so far; after which there was a matter of another four hundred miles, one-fourth of them mountain-passes, to be traversed and made safe between Shikarpur and Kandahar. William Windham had projected, but fortunately had abandoned, the landing of five or six thousand men on the western coast of South America, with the design that it should march across the Andes and join another force that had been landed in the Rio de la Plata; and this, it might have been thought, was the extreme of reckless folly to which an English civil administrator could attain in the planning of military operations. But even Windham must yield the palm of imbecility to Auckland. If we imagine a German army marching through France to the invasion of Spain, and effecting, north of the Pyrenees, a junction with a weak force landed at the mouth of the Adour, we can take some measure of the hazard of the enterprise. 1838. Dec.

Things were not well at Ferozepore in those last days of December 1838, and Fane, who had been punctual in accomplishing his concentration, was very uneasy. Though he was not to command the army, he was to travel with it by water on his way to Bombay and to England, and he felt his responsibility for the preliminary arrangements. In his view—and he was quite correct—it was of vital importance that the troops should have passed through the Bolan pass before the end of March, so as to escape any extreme heat in

1838. Dec. those parts. He had, therefore, fixed the day for leaving Ferozepore for the 2nd or 3rd of December at latest. Knowing, too, that supply would be the great difficulty, he had from the first urged the establishment of depôts along the line of the river to Bahawalpur. Yet on the 1st of December he was greeted with a request that the march of the army should be delayed until the 10th, to enable fuel and forage to be cut for the army on its passage through Bahawalpur territory. Fane was furious. "This staggers my confidence in the commissariat," he wrote to Auckland. ". . . Even an hour's delay is serious . . . and it is a great evil to the army to be delayed by want of common foresight."

The truth was that the entire business of establishing supply-depôts along the enormous line of the army's projected march had been committed to political agents. Having been originally of the military profession, these gentlemen bore military titles; but, though full of zeal and industry, they had no knowledge of the requirements of an army, and were already in difficulties over this vital matter. One of them, Lieutenant Mackeson, had seen to the cutting of a road through heavy jungle from Bahawalpur to the frontier of Sind, and could announce, on the 29th of November, that the magazines were ready for the Shah's contingent, as also, with the important exception of grain, for the British troops also. But Fane distrusted these reports from "inexperienced persons." "If," he wrote to Auckland, "such matters are left to be settled by any subordinate civil officer, discord will inevitably ensue, and your expectations will be disappointed." In Lower Sind matters were far more serious. Owing to a partial failure of the inundation of the Indus the last crops had not been too abundant, and a part of them had been exported to relieve famine in the north-west provinces of India. Burnes was obliged to confess on the 14th of November that depôts of grain, promised

by the Amirs, at Shikarpur, Bukkur and Larkhana did not exist, though his agents were busy creating them. It was very evident that the expedition, dangerous even to madness in its mere conception, was to be made yet more hazardous by sheer mismanagement. 1838. Dec.

As Fane considered the situation, his anxiety was painfully increased. He had no great confidence in Cotton, who had served far too long in India. "I don't think," he wrote, "that Cotton has a mind which carries away much of verbal instructions"—a delicate way of insinuating that he was both slow and stupid—and he accordingly addressed to him a few hints in such guarded language as his loyalty to Auckland permitted to him. "The countries through which you pass on the way to the Indus are not supposed (by me) to be abundant in resources. Fuel and supplies will demand your constant attention. You are furnished with a commissariat which the Supreme Government deems ample"—the aposiopesis as to the Commander-in-chief's opinion of the same being eloquent. But to Auckland he wrote far more openly and seriously. "I do hope that all circumstances that may happen to the army may be considered. The chance of any reverse in Afghanistan should be carefully weighed, for there is the Bolan pass and Sind behind it in one quarter, and the Khyber pass and Sikhs in another. The army will be placed in a position to be surrounded and annihilated unless due precautions be taken in time. Supposing a reverse—what is to be the army's line of retreat? Magazines should be collected beside it. The safety of the army should be placed beyond doubt."

Auckland, for his part, professed to share all of Fane's anxieties, agree with all of his recommendations and deplore with him all shortcomings. But he made the excuse for his agents that the people in territory not under British control were reluctant to act at their bidding, and, as a remedy for this failing, he empowered Cotton to requisition supplies by force in

1838. Dec. Bahawalpur and elsewhere, in case of real necessity. But how such a measure was to render the British communications more secure he did not explain. Indeed the nature of the instructions which he wrote at this very time for Keane and Macnaghten show that Auckland had a very imperfect apprehension of the military risks that he was taking. The first and strongest point impressed upon both the general and the civilian was that Shah Shuja's progress should bear, if possible, the semblance of a peaceful march. His own detachment, therefore, was to be under Macnaghten's immediate control and was to move in advance of the British; and the Shah was to appear the undoubted chief of the enterprise, not, upon any account, a puppet dependent upon foreign power. If the Shah should encounter resistance in arms then Keane was to act with vigour, taking the Shah's troops as well as his own under his orders; in fact "every military operation was to be under the unqualified direction of the general in command, and Macnaghten would require his concurrence in every measure upon which military operations might depend." Further, Macnaghten, who combined the double function of envoy and minister to Shah Shuja, was to sanction no declaration of war, no new treaty and no correspondence with foreign powers, except in full concert and agreement with Keane. On the other hand, in all political proceedings and all matters concerning the Shah's court, government and proceedings, Macnaghten, though in communication with Keane, was to act upon his single responsibility. For, if the Shah were established at Kabul, Keane's work would be done, the British troops would be withdrawn, and Macnaghten would be left as sole Resident in Afghanistan. Meanwhile the Shah's disciplined force was not to be used to aid in the ordinary maintenance of internal tranquillity.[1]

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 2 of 1838, Fane to Auckland, Dec. 2. Memo. of Fane, Dec. 5. Auckland to Fane and Keane, Dec. 5; to Fane, Dec. 6; to Macnaghten, Dec. 8, 1838.

No sane man could issue such instructions as these except in the blindest assurance of a bloodless campaign; but, were such bloodlessness never so certain, they remain inexcusable. The Shah was to appear the undoubted head of the enterprise, but was actually to be a tool in Macnaghten's hands. His disciplined troops were to be under Macnaghten's immediate control, but were not to be used in Afghanistan for purposes of internal police; the inference being that this task must fall upon the British. Lastly, Macnaghten was to control the Shah's foreign policy, Keane's concurrence being required if such policy were likely to involve military operations. But what is a military operation? It was in Macnaghten's power to order a small detachment, or even the whole of the Shah's force, to march from some one point to some other. He might not consider this a military operation at all. He might regard it in much the same light as ordering a battalion of the Guards to march from London to Hounslow. And yet, among turbulent tribes in a wild and mountainous country, the movement of a company or two over a distance of a few miles might prove to be a military operation, ultimately entailing a whole series of military operations in which Keane, though not originally consulted, might be bound by later events to take part. In other words Macnaghten, without the slightest military knowledge, was empowered to entangle himself and the Shah in military difficulties, and to require the military commander to extricate him. Such was the wisdom of Auckland under the guidance of Macnaghten himself, and of Macnaghten's peers. 1838. Dec.

However, on the 2nd of December, Shah Shuja's force marched from Ferozepore, and on the 10th the British started likewise. These latter moved off in five columns, which followed each other at one day's interval; head-quarters, with the cavalry brigade leading the way, and after them in succession the

1838. Dec. infantry, artillery, supplies and stores. The victuals included thirty days' allowance of grain and slaughter-cattle "on the hoof" for two and a half months. For the supplies alone over fourteen thousand camels were required, besides a very large number for the ordnance-stores, for which it had been found impossible to collect water-carriage. From these figures alone some idea may be formed of the vast number of animals required for the army. But this was not all. Not only were the troops hampered by four times their number of followers, making altogether some fifty thousands souls; but the officers, true to the comfortable tradition of campaigns in the plains, had encumbered themselves with an extravagant quantity of baggage and endless retinues of servants. It was said that one brigadier had sixty camels to convey the various articles which he deemed necessary for himself alone. In this way the camels, public and private, attached to the army counted from twenty-five to thirty thousand. Such a number, if placed in single file with no interval from nose to croup, would extend from London to Reading and beyond it.

Fane, as became a veteran of the Peninsula, had not overlooked this difficulty but had tried to meet it. Thus he had ordered that the infantry should carry their packs instead of loading them, as was customary, upon animals hired by themselves; though officers with long experience of India judged that the additional fatigue, with its necessary accompaniment of sickness, thus caused to the troops was not worth the saving of transport and forage.[1] Further, Fane had cautioned the officers against bringing into the field large tents, large establishments and much baggage; but something more than advice was needed,[2] though possibly, remembering the retreat from Burgos, Fane may have counted upon the enemy to do the necessary work of thinning the baggage-trains. In any case

[1] Havelock, i. 23.

[2] Hough, p. 9.

the army set off on its two hundred miles' journey down the Sutlej to Bahawalpur with all the unwieldy bulk of a moving city. 1838. Dec.

Trouble with the transport and supply began directly. The general conditions were not unfavourable. The weather was cold, but the air was clear and healthy; the country was open, and the roads were good; but the Shah's contingent, arriving on the 15th within three marches of Bahawalpur, reported that it was already in difficulties over victuals, and that no supplies had been laid in within the territory of Bahawalpur for the British troops that were following in rear. Cotton, on the 19th, complained that at every stage the depôts of grain had been found deficient. The commissariat also was bitterly bewailing the order of march, which condemned the supplies and stores to the rearmost place, and so to dearth of forage almost from the day of leaving Ferozepore. They left their camping-ground at daylight and were often halted for hours while the foremost columns defiled through some strait; and, when at last they reached their halting-place early in the afternoon, the camels were driven far afield to find fodder, and at nightfall were driven back after only two hours' grazing and little food. Thus the beasts were overworked and underfed; and matters were not improved by the fact that the water was brackish and strongly saline all the way from Ferozepore to Rohri. After reaching the city of Bahawalpur, it was necessary to allow the commissariat to move off several hours in advance of the troops; but this gave facilities for another great evil. Already vast numbers of camel-drivers had deserted, carrying their camels with them, the Hindustanis from sheer terror of the strange land in which they found themselves, the Sikhs from resentment at being subjected to such a service. The loss of private baggage and of camp-equipment during the first six marches alone was very serious, and the trouble was not likely to be diminished by allowing

1838. Dec. the transport to take the lead of the army on the march.[1]

At Bahawalpur, which was reached by head-quarters on the 29th of December, the columns halted and closed up; and Fane, who had come down the river by water on his homeward journey, exchanged courtesies with the Khan. On the 31st news came in from Burnes that the Amir of Khairpur had, with some difficulty, been persuaded to cede the island of Bukkur for the construction of a bridge over the Indus, but that the Amirs of Hyderabad were likely to offer resistance. He pressed, therefore, for the rapid advance of the army into Sind; and all ranks, fed with tales of fabulous wealth within Hyderabad, looked forward to a rich share of prize-money. On the 1st 1839. of January 1839, the march was resumed; and the Jan. army moved by Ahmadpur to Khanpur, which was reached by head-quarters on the 8th. Here, thanks to Mackeson, the political agent, there was a fresh supply of camels, which in some measure made good the losses of the four previous weeks. After one day's halt, head-quarters continued the advance, and on the 14th reached the border of Sind. Burnes, who had arrived on the previous day, announced that the Sindians were still adverse to the passage of the British through their territory, and that, though they might be cowed into outward submission, they would lose no opportunity of throwing hindrances covertly in its way. Head-quarters seemed to realise that when once the Sindian frontier was crossed the major difficulties of the campaign would begin; but for the present all remained in suspense.

However, the columns marched on, slowly, for the camels, being ill-fed, were weak. Great numbers died and very many disappeared through the flight of their drivers; for the owners of the hired animals

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 9 of 1840; *Report of Commissary-general Curtis*, Feb. 29, 1840; vol. 2 of 1839; Cotton to Auckland, Dec. 19, 1838; Havelock, i. 97-98; Hough, p. 9.

disliked the idea of their passing the Indus, and the nearer the army drew to the crossing-place, the more clearly that dislike expressed itself through desertion. On the 19th it was discovered that the mortality of the camels that carried grain was outrunning the consumption of their loads,[1] a fact which seems to point to extreme inefficiency on the part of the commissariat. Though the supplies collected on the line of march were not sufficient to feed the whole of the columns, yet they were enough to relieve at any rate a certain number of camels from carrying a load for a few days, which would have meant the saving of their lives. But it should seem that, in the general confusion, no unloaded camel could travel far without having a burden of some kind, private or public, laid upon his back, and that thus hundreds, if not thousands, were broken down by sheer mismanagement. 1839. Jan.

On the 24th of January the head of the column trailed into Rohri, opposite Sukkur, about two hundred miles up the river from Hyderabad; Fane, always pursuing his way down stream, having arrived there before it. Shah Shuja's force, having crossed the river in boats between the 11th and the 17th, was safely out of the way at Shikarpur; and the British engineers were making good progress with the construction of a bridge. But the latest news from Keane said only that the Governor-general's treaty would shortly be despatched to the Amirs of Hyderabad, and that upon its acceptance or rejection depended peace or war. Fane interpreted the silence as to the issue in his own way. On the 26th he received a ceremonial visit from the Amir of Khairpur, who produced the separate treaty which he made with the British, duly ratified, and declared that he would insist upon the acceptance of the British terms by the chief of Hyderabad. "I have wasted time enough in treating," answered Fane by the mouth of Burnes. "I will now march down and attack him." Curiously

[1] Hough, p. 13.

1839. Jan. enough, this was precisely the movement which Keane at that moment was advocating.

We left the Bombay division halted at Tatta, where it commanded communication both with Vikkur and Karachi, pending the ultimate issue of Pottinger's negotiations with the Amirs of Hyderabad. On the 18th of January Pottinger at last ventured to lay before the Amirs the terms which Auckland was resolved to impose upon them; and on the 23rd Keane advanced by the right bank of the Indus, and on the 25th halted at Jerrak, two marches from Hyderabad, to allow his supplies and stores to come up with him. The Amirs rejected the treaty; and Keane at once wrote to Fane begging that a column might advance forthwith upon Hyderabad from the north.

Fane, having made up his mind, issued orders on the 26th for the cavalry brigade and two brigades of infantry to move on the following day. But meanwhile the Amir of Khairpur made difficulties about the cession of Bukkur. A very old man, he felt the humiliation of surrendering his fort, and, knowing that his brethren of Hyderabad had declined to yield, clung to the hope that some chance might deliver him from it. For two days Burnes cajoled and threatened, till at last on the 29th the keys of Bukkur were delivered to him, though even to the end it was doubtful whether the stronghold would be peaceably surrendered. However, upon the embarkation of a few companies of native infantry for the island of Bukkur, the garrison evacuated the place, and on the 30th Cotton marched south with some fifty-six hundred men upon Hyderabad.

Keane, meanwhile, remained at Jerrak and laid his plans for throwing his force across the Indus, under cover of his artillery, in the face of the entire Baluchi army. The operation would have been extremely hazardous, for he had none but square-headed unmanageable boats; the stream was swift and a thousand

yards broad; and the men must have landed as best they could on banks covered with jungle. It would have been, in fact, a disembarkation of the most dangerous kind; and, though Keane was confident of success, Fane was not so sanguine, and ordered the engineers at Bukkur to be ready to break up their nearly completed bridge, embark engineers, gunners and artillery, and drop down the river to the neighbourhood of Hyderabad. But meanwhile the Amirs, having news of Cotton's march, grew nervous, and, reopening negotiations, agreed on the 1st of February to accept Pottinger's terms. On the 5th Cotton received Keane's original message asking for his help, but on the night of the 6th a messenger came into Kandiaro, sixty miles south of Rohri, to report that the Amirs had agreed to the treaty; and after three days' halt the column began its journey back to Rohri. The march had been absolutely unopposed, but forage had been scarce, and the loss of camels had in consequence been very serious.

1839. Jan. Feb.

Thus, owing to the military incapacity of the Amirs, Keane's isolated force was delivered from all danger of destruction, and the arrival of the Bombay Reserve Force,[1] under Major-general Valiant, at Karachi, on the 3rd of February relieved him from the protection of his base on the sea. There was, indeed, some show of resistance to the disembarkation at Karachi, but the Sindian forts were silenced by a single broadside from the line-of-battle-ship, *Wellesley*, and the troops then landed without molestation. Keane, however, was by no means easy about the future, and was quite as distrustful as Fane of the competence of political officers to collect supplies for the army. Moreover, he was in grave difficulties for transport, having no more than twenty-four hundred camels, despite of all Outram's efforts, for the five thousand men of the

[1] H.M. 40th Foot.
2nd Bombay Grenadiers.
22nd and 26th Bombay N.I.

1839. Feb. Bombay division. Auckland, it is true, had written in an airy way that the Bengal commissariat had thirty thousand camels; but the Commissary-general reported that he had only half of that number, and there was no prospect that Burnes, or any other political agent, could make good the deficiency.

As it happened, too, just at this time there were two awkward complications. The chief minister, Yar Mohamed Khan, of the ruler of Herat had at the end of 1838 picked a quarrel with the English mission in that place, and had ordered the two members, Eldred Pottinger and Colonel Stoddart, to leave it forthwith. Burnes at once detected the hand of Russia in this incident, and declared that the army must be prepared to advance to Herat and secure it for Shah Shuja. He therefore recommended that Duncan's division should move across the Punjab upon Kabul, being replaced by another division at Ferozepore, while the existing army of the Indus should move upon Kandahar and Herat. The bare news of the expulsion of Pottinger and Stoddart, without any details, reached Keane in the third week of January, adding a new element of uncertainty to a situation which was already sufficiently anxious. Then Macnaghten, who was at Shikarpur with Shah Shuja and knew not the course of Pottinger's negotiations with the Amirs, became nervous lest active hostilities with Sind should delay the grand enterprise against Afghanistan for a whole season; and on the 6th of February he urged an immediate advance upon Kandahar. His idea was that one brigade of infantry, one regiment of native cavalry and a proportion of artillery added to Shah Shuja's contingent would suffice for the purpose, since the resistance offered would be very inconsiderable. It was true that the Shah's force was in want of eight thousand more camels, but Cotton would furnish a thousand, "and with this addition," he wrote cheerfully, "we shall be able to scramble on somehow." He therefore ordered Cotton on the

7th to throw the detachment above named across the Indus forthwith, so as to prosecute the advance into Afghanistan without further delay. 1839. Feb.

Macnaghten was pressing, and Cotton was not a strong man; but Cotton at least knew his duty well enough to decline to obey Macnaghten's orders without the sanction of Keane. Thereupon Macnaghten addressed himself directly to Keane, and apparently suggested as an alternative that Shah Shuja's contingent, taking with it all the artillery of the Bengal column, should advance first, leaving the British troops to follow in rear, and that Keane should decide for himself whether he should accompany the Shah in person. To this Keane replied with a very decided negative. The Shah's troops, as he truly said, were only half-disciplined; and it would be too perilous to risk failure at the outset, much more to hazard the whole of the British artillery. Any reflections on the impudence of Macnaghten in thus attempting to take the Commander-in-chief under his orders—for it must be remembered that Macnaghten's control of the Shah's force was absolute—Keane kept to himself.[1]

Meanwhile the conveyance of stores across the Indus in barges had begun on the 9th of February, and the bridge of boats over the river had been completed. This latter work was most creditable to the chief engineer, Major Thomson, and his subordinates, for they had been very ill-provided with materials. They had no regular pontoons and could only with difficulty obtain native craft; they had to make their own ropes, fell and saw up most of the timbers and improvise anchors for themselves; they had no sappers trained to such operations and no boatmen except Sindians,

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 2 of 1839; Burnes to Indian government, Dec. 28, 1838; Keane to Auckland, Jan. 22, 1839; vol. 5, Commissary Johnson to O.C. Shah's contingent, Jan. 14, 1839; Macnaghten to Pottinger, Feb. 6; to Cotton, Feb. 7; to Keane, Feb. 11; Keane to Cotton, Feb. 23, 1839.

1839. Feb. whose language they did not understand; and finally, they had to deal with a swift and treacherous stream, subject to sudden rises and falls and encumbered by floating boughs and snags. Yet by sheer perseverance and resource they overcame all difficulties, putting to utter shame the inefficient departments which had sent them forth to so arduous a task without a thought for their requirements.[1]

On the 15th Cotton's column returned to Rohri, and by the 18th every man and beast had passed the river without a single accident of any kind. A native battalion was left to garrison the fort of Bukkur; the heavy baggage of the cavalry brigade was deposited with it; a hospital was established at Sukkur; and orders were issued for the longer section of the bridge to be broken up, and for the boats to be employed as ferries at Ferozepore and Rohri. On the 18th Fane took leave of the army and pursued his way down the river to Bombay, and Keane assumed the supreme command. The cavalry of both presidencies was now united, for purposes of organisation, into a division under Major-general Thackwell; the Bengal infantry became the First Division under Cotton, and the Bombay infantry the Second Division under Major-general Willshire. Until Keane should come up, Cotton retained command of the Bengal troops, the whole of which marched, between the 17th and the 20th, into Shikarpur.

Meanwhile, the Bombay column had moved northward from Jerrak to Kotri, a little to the south-west of Hyderabad, whence after four days' halt it resumed its march northward. Heavy dust-storms on the 12th and 13th caused two days of misery to the troops; but, travelling by way of Manjhand, Sann and Amri, they came on the 16th to Laki, where the mountains then abutted on the river. Here it was suddenly discovered that the pass between the high ground and the Indus was impracticable for artillery, and two days were

[1] Durand, p. 122.

occupied in improving the road; though why this obstacle had not been reconnoitred and penetrated before the troops reached it is not explained. However, having at length surmounted it the column pursued its way by Sehwan, where it entered the fertile district known as the Garden of Sind, up the river to Larkhana, about forty miles south-west of Shikarpur, where for nine days, from the 3rd to the 11th of March, it remained stationary. Keane, during the halt at Laki, had pushed on with an escort to Sehwan to take leave of Fane; and it is absolutely inexplicable why he did not go straight on to Shikarpur, where three-fourths of his army was assembled and where his presence was urgently needed. Want of transport had compelled him to waste two whole months in carrying the Bombay column over the eighty miles from his landing-place to Jerrak; the same trouble added to the attitude of the Amirs had detained him at Jerrak for some ten days more; and this was no fault of his. But, when once the Amirs had accepted Pottinger's treaty, there was no reason whatever why he should not have joined his principal force at once; and his failure to do so, which led to most serious consequences, was quite inexcusable. 1839. Feb.

On the 22nd of January Keane wrote to Auckland that he could not hear of any great amount of supplies collected at Shikarpur by Burnes or by his political brethren, and that it was extremely doubtful whether further advance could be hazarded unless a very large magazine were formed either there or in some neighbouring place. The Commissary-general was likewise anxious [1] to halt for three weeks at Shikarpur, in order to collect the greatest possible quantity of victuals, and to that end had at once detached to the rear four thousand camels. But now again the impatient Macnaghten intervened. According to his intelligence (which was invariably wrong), the Bolan pass was about to be occupied by the enemy, and the passage of

[1] Hough, p. 32.

1839. Feb. the defile, unless accomplished at once, would be contested. He urged, therefore, immediate advance; Burnes, who had persuaded himself of a fresh attempt of the Persians upon Herat, seconded Macnaghten; and Cotton, instead of insisting that he must first obtain Keane's sanction, too quickly gave way.

It must be said in his excuse that he had already had an unpleasant controversy with Macnaghten. The envoy had demanded a thousand of Cotton's camels for the Shah's contingent, and Cotton, declaring this to be civil encroachment upon military authority, had declined to give them without Keane's consent. Macnaghten rejoined that the march of the Shah's contingent was a political matter of the first importance, that it could not be accomplished without transport, and that he should refer the matter to the Governor-general. The two men had the good sense not to lose their tempers; but Cotton was sensitive in the matter of transport, for he had been lately warned that his commissariat must provide for the Bombay troops as well as for his own, and he had therefore some reason to resent the claim of a thousand camels for a force of very doubtful value. On the other hand, he had written a month before to Auckland expressing on other grounds the hope that Keane would not keep the Bengal force long at Shikarpur; and it was very certain that, if Keane were not on the spot, Cotton could leave orders to allot both to the Bombay troops and to the Shah's contingent such animals as he could with least reluctance spare. It is in fact impossible to ascribe to Cotton purely military or patriotic motives when, on the 21st of February, he issued orders for his troops to advance on the morrow.

The distance to be traversed from Shikarpur to Dadhar, at the eastern end of the Bolan pass, was one hundred and seventy miles, of which about one hundred miles was practically desert, the villages being few and far asunder, water scanty and bad, and forage barely procurable. The length of the marches was definitely

fixed by the distance from group to group of wells; but, though the Shah's contingent had lain idle at Shikarpur for a full month, no attempt had been made by its commander, Macnaghten, to form any depôts of grain upon the line of route, to collect supplies of forage at the halting-places, nor to improve the facilities for obtaining water. Moreover, Cotton had allowed the number of the army's followers to swell unchecked; the followers of the Shah's force had likewise increased considerably; and altogether the commissariat was charged with the business of maintaining some eighty thousand souls, barely one-fifth of them combatants. 1839. Feb.

Since no large body could pass over such a district at one time, Cotton distributed his force into seven columns, which were to follow each other upon consecutive days; the engineers and their escort leading the way, followed in succession by the cavalry brigade, two infantry brigades, the park of artillery, the stores, and a third infantry brigade, with which last travelled Shah Shuja, though his contingent was not to start until the 7th of March. At the second stage outward from Shikarpur there were already difficulties over water and forage, and the Sixteenth Lancers were obliged to move in two detachments. The longest tract of absolutely waterless country was twenty-six miles, and at Barshori, which marked its northern extremity, the water was so noisome that no human being could touch it, and even the horses refused to drink. It was questioned whether it would not be expedient to counter-march; but a messenger, sent forward to inquire from the engineers as to the prospects further on, brought word from Thomson that the cavalry must advance at all hazards, since a retrograde movement at this time would be the ruin of the expedition, and that the engineers would go forward whether the cavalry followed them or not. The Sixteenth, therefore, pursued their way to Mirpur, fourteen miles west of Barshori, where water, though brackish, was more abundant; and another fourteen miles northward

1839. March. brought them to Usta, where was a lake of sweet water, with fields of green corn, which were instantly devoured by the starving cattle. The next halting-places were Bagh, where a small quantity of grain was procured, Makesar, on the Bolan river, which set at rest any further anxiety as to water, Naoshera, and finally Dadhar, which was reached by head-quarters on the 10th of March, the seventeenth day after leaving Shikarpur.

A movement, conducted with so little foresight that it narrowly missed failure at the outset, could not fail to be costly. The horses suffered severely, first from want of forage and water, and then from a sudden supply of green fodder, which lowered them still further in strength and condition. Nott severely condemned Cotton for sending the cavalry ahead of the infantry, instead of allowing it to follow in rear at such speed as the water-supply permitted; but Cotton was not a man capable of much thought. The camels, disabled by heavy loads and want of food, dropped down by hundreds; and, from the moment when the columns entered Baluchistan at Barshori, the predatory mountaineers swooped down upon them, cutting down followers, carrying off camels and cattle, and causing general alarm and confusion. That such things should occur in the open plains was discreditable, and promised ill for the time when the troops should enter the passes; but the fault lay not chiefly with the military authorities. The political agents deprecated effective measures for protecting the line of march, lest the Baluchi tribes should be stirred into active hostilities. An attack upon a hospital-waggon and the wounding of some sick provoked orders to the leading detachment that the soldiers covering the line of march were to use force against marauders; but the only result was a complaint from Burnes to Cotton that such instructions were "bloodthirsty and calculated to bring on a blood-feud." [1] "The political officers,"

[1] Durand, p. 132.

wrote Keane to Auckland, three months later, "led me—and I suppose you—to believe that we should find the country friendly from Shikarpur to Kandahar. . . . There was no hint that it was full of robbers, plunderers and murderers, brought up to it from their youth."[1] Such men as Burnes, blind with the infatuation of their own conceit, would not allow such trifles as the slaughter of a few sick soldiers to upset their cherished theories. 1839. March.

However, Dadhar was reached; but now again the question of victuals became pressing. Despite of all previous losses of cattle, Cotton, when he started from Shikarpur, had still transport for six weeks' supplies. Kandahar was reckoned to be thirty-two marches, making no allowance for halts, from Shikarpur; and the margin was therefore, for practical purposes, on the wrong side. But Cotton's commissary counted upon finding ten days' victuals at Dadhar and twenty days' more at Quetta, on the other side of the Bolan pass. Dadhar, however, could produce only one day's supplies; and on the 8th of March it was necessary to place the followers upon half-rations, as the grain could not be brought forward with sufficient rapidity to feed them. Unless, therefore, Quetta should fulfil its promise better than Dadhar, Cotton had practically but one month's victuals to carry him to Kandahar, a distance of some two hundred miles, of which sixty lay through the Bolan pass.

In the circumstances it might have been expected that Cotton would have cut down the number of the followers to the lowest possible figure and reduced the baggage to the utmost; but nothing of the kind occurred to the good, easy man. He had the foresight to push forward a reconnoitring party under a good officer, Major Cureton of the Sixteenth Lancers, into the pass; and under this escort Burnes started on a mission to the Khan of Kalat, while the indefatigable engineers under Major Thomson began the work of

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 14 of 1839, Keane to Auckland, June 3, 1839.

1839. March. rendering the track through the defile practicable for the troops. Cotton was urgent that he should find a better road than that from Bagh to Dadhar; and, when it was represented to him that the Bolan was a mountain-pass, choked with boulders and rough shingle, which could not easily be cleared away, he answered, with touching simplicity, that "the stones might be broken." Even now, he could not wean himself from the traditions of an old-fashioned campaign in the plains.

Cureton entered the pass on the 11th, while the main body remained halted for the columns to close up. Reports from the rear announced constant attacks of Baluchis upon camp-followers; and round Dadhar itself the foragers were not exempt from the same danger. On the other hand, Burnes succeeded in persuading the neighbouring Baluchi tribes not to impede the progress of the main body through the pass, which was a valuable service; and Cotton ordered the march to be resumed on the 15th. It was postponed for a day owing to the desertion of one complete party of regimental litter-bearers; but these recalcitrant men were headed off and hounded back; and on the 16th the head of the column entered the gorge. Observant officers, noting how admirably the defile lent itself to defence against an invading army, were thankful that they were not called upon to force a passage.[1]

The depth of the mountain-barrier at this point is about one hundred and twenty miles, one-half of which is pierced by the single pass of the Bolan. The path followed closely on the bed of the Bolan river, which during the rains or the melting of the snow becomes a raging torrent, sweeping all before it and flooding the camping grounds on its banks. These camping grounds were few, limited in area and always foul, the Bolan being, after the Khyber, the most important commercial route between Afghanistan

[1] Havelock, i. 214.

and India. The Oriental is not remarkable for cleanliness in camp; but, even if he were subject to the sanitary laws of Moses, he would often find it difficult to fulfil them in this pass, the soil being frequently so thin that it would not hold a tent-peg, much less afford space for the burial of foul matter or of dead animals. The track was so stony as to be very trying to the feet of horses or camels, and absolutely fatal to the feet of bullocks, which were soon worn to the quick by constant attrition; and it crossed the water as often as sixteen to twenty times in a single day's march. Finally, though water was plentiful, there was complete dearth alike of forage and of fuel. 1839. March.

Since immunity from attack was by no means assured, Cotton broke up his force into small columns of all three arms, each with its own proportion of supplies, which were to follow each other in succession. The weather was not unfavourable, though upon one day heavy rain so swelled the torrent that the camp of the engineers was swept away. The temperature was moderate, the cold before dawn not sinking to freezing-point, and the heat at noon not exceeding that of an English summer. At Dozan, near the western outlet of the pass, the engineers had blasted out a road over the hills to the north, in order to save the labour of following the existing more circuitous track to the west. The guns of the horse-artillery, despite of eight horses and a number of men to each piece, were only with great difficulty brought to their halting-place, and the destruction of camels was very great. However, by great exertion the leading column reached Sar-i-Bolan on the 20th, debouched from the pass to the plain on the 21st, and halted at Sar-i-ab, ten miles south of Quetta, to allow the rear columns to close up. Every one of them reported heavy loss of transport-animals and of baggage, including the men's quilts. The Fourth Brigade alone lost close upon two hundred and fifty camels in four days from starvation; and at every ten yards in the

1839. March. pass lay a dead camel or a dead bullock or a broken-down cart. Marauders, too, had carried off many living animals with astounding audacity. General Nott himself, with an escort of four troopers, had ridden down one such band of camel-robbers; and one of his battalions had been obliged to clear a horde of sharpshooters from the outlet of the pass before it could emerge from the defile. However, notwithstanding cruel casualties among beasts and followers, the Bengal division traversed the Bolan pass with little molestation; and on the 26th Cotton moved on to the wretched mud village of Quetta and halted, in obedience to orders, to await the further directions of the Commander-in-chief.

He now found himself in a very anxious situation. Keane, very angry with him for having advanced from Shikarpur without orders, had censured him severely, and peremptorily forbidden him to leave Quetta until he himself should come up. But this was not the worst. Cotton had counted upon finding twenty days' supplies at Quetta, and he found practically none. His commissary, on the 28th of March, reported one-third of his camels to have perished, and the survivors to be in such wretched condition as to be unfit to carry more than half-loads. Only ten days' victuals were left for the cavalry and for the First Infantry Brigade, with no prospect of obtaining more; and there was only two days' store of grain for the horses of the cavalry and artillery. Kandahar was one hundred and fifty miles ahead, with the Khojak pass, a most difficult obstacle, on the way. Shikarpur was two hundred miles in rear, and not to be reached without retraversing the whole length of the Bolan pass. Cotton could move neither forward nor back; and to this dilemma he had been reduced by his disloyalty to his military chief, and his ready acceptance of the promptings of two so vain and shallow men as Macnaghten and Burnes.

The only thing to be done immediately was to

place the troops upon half-rations and the followers upon quarter-rations, but Cotton hesitated to take even this step lest he should rouse discontent among the fighting-men, until Thomson, the engineer, fairly forced him to a decision. As a more practical measure he sent Burnes on a mission to Mehrab Khan of Kalat, to induce him, if possible, to furnish supplies, which as the Khan had already failed to fulfil his undertaking to collect depôts of grain at Dadhar and Quetta, seemed not very promising. Burnes was well received; but Mehrab Khan told him some unpleasant truths; complaining justly that his territory had already suffered much from the passage of the British force, declaring truly that a bad harvest had left little grain in his country, and predicting the ultimate failure of the enterprise. In return, however, for the promise of an annual subsidy of £15,000 he agreed to pay homage to Shah Shuja, whom he disliked and distrusted, to do his best to provide victuals, and to give safe passage to the British convoys from Shikarpur through the mountains. Of the promised subsidy Burnes paid to Mehrab £2000 on the spot to conciliate him, and, having done so, proceeded to insult him, thus increasing the Khan's suspicions at the very moment when it was most desirable to allay them, and furnishing him with the funds to raise and pay the tribes if he designed to incite them against the British. Altogether Burnes's diplomacy at Kalat was wholly unprofitable to the British army, and was the beginning of troubles which were to prove fatal to Mehrab Khan. 1839. March.

Therewith Cotton's efforts to extricate himself from his troubles were practically exhausted. As the commissariat could supply no grain for the horses of the cavalry and artillery, he gave commanding officers liberty to make their own arrangements—a simple device which, as only green growing corn was procurable, could do little to fill the animals' bellies or improve their condition. He seems to have made an appeal to Keane for permission to advance, for Keane,

1839. April. on the 27th of March[1] refused it, saying that there was no object in leaving Quetta until Shah Shuja should come up to lead the movement upon Kandahar. At length, in despair, Cotton appears either to have resorted to the political agents for advice or to have received it from them unasked, for Captain Leech, one of Burnes's underlings, pointed out that there were three courses open to him, namely, to march at once upon Kandahar notwithstanding Keane's prohibition; to make a foraging expedition towards Kalat; or to retreat at once upon Shikarpur, leaving a detachment at Quetta. He adopted not one of these measures, keeping Leech's counsel entirely to himself; and indeed the incident might never have become known had not a copy of Leech's letter—probably torn from the body of some hapless murdered messenger—been picked up in the Bolan pass and carried to Macnaghten. There was a fourth course open, namely, to move on very slowly and by easy marches, so as to husband provisions and forage to the utmost, and lead cavalry and followers over fresh ground, where at least they might find something to eat. But having flouted Keane once, by advancing wrongly and without orders from Shikarpur, Cotton dared not flout him a second time, when Keane was wrong and he himself right.

And so the unhappy man sat still at Quetta, consuming the supplies of his fighting-men, and starving both his horses and his followers. Symptoms of the unfriendliness of the tribes now became frequent. Cotton had issued strict orders to prevent plunder and to ensure respect for the women and for the religious feelings of the people, hoping to conciliate them and to obtain from them food. But the predatory instincts of the tribes were too strong to be overcome by blandishment; and on the 31st of March a party of robbers swooped down from the hills and carried off two hundred camels in a body. Such

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 8 of 1838, Keane to Cotton, March 27, 1839.

thefts now became frequent, and with good reason, 1839.
for the starving followers, despite of all orders and April.
the severest punishments, were perpetually stealing
food and forage, whereupon the tribesmen retaliated
not only by slaying them without mercy, but by
carrying off every camel that they could appropriate.
Very soon the followers were living on fried sheepskins
and congealed blood; and Cotton sat still bemoaning
his hard fate, until all ranks from the general to the
drummer were discussing but one topic, the miserable
outlook for the army and the certain prospect of
starvation.

Through most of this time Keane, though fully March.
warned by Fane of Cotton's incapacity, was dawdling
far away with the Bombay division. Not until the
12th of March did this division, now reduced to
eighteen hundred Europeans and as many native
soldiers, break up from Larkhana, whence it marched,
through hot and sultry weather, across the desert to
Shadihar and by Jhal upon Gandava, which was
reached on the 21st. It had been Keane's idea that
he might find the pass from thence to Kalat practicable
for his column; and the plan was not a bad one, for
the Bombay division in such a case might have reached
the highlands of Afghanistan nearly as soon as Cotton.
Two days were spent in reconnaissance of the pass,
after which Keane decided that it would be better to
make for the Bolan; and on the 23rd, leaving the
Bombay troops to follow him on the 31st, he at last
rode forward to join the Bengal column.

On the 26th Keane met Shah Shuja at Naoshera,
and on the following day moved on with him to
Dadhar. Here he took measures to establish a
magazine of supplies, and inquired as to the transport
provided for the Bombay troops by the Bengal com-
missariat. The result was not satisfactory. Cotton
had undertaken to leave two thousand camels for them
at Shikarpur, but two-thirds of these were still on
the east bank of the Indus. He had promised a

1839. April. thousand camels to Shah Shuja, but only five hundred were forthcoming. The truth was that the whole arrangement of the transport had been utterly confounded, because the Bengal commissariat had been called upon without warning to find carriage for the Bombay division. The consequence was that the Bengal troops were crippled, the Bombay troops were not half equipped, and the inevitable jealousy between the two was greatly embittered. It was with no very amiable feelings that Keane, in company with Shah Shuja and Macnaghten, entered the Bolan pass. On the 4th of April he rode into Sar-i-ab, whither Cotton had come back to meet him; and here his camp was attacked by plundering tribesmen, of whom eleven were taken and at once shot. On the 6th, at last, he rode into Quetta, to find the Bengal troops, from highest to lowest, sunk in utter gloom and despondency.

For this Keane had no one to thank but himself; but it is fair to say that when at last he did assume personal command, he showed energy and decision. Realising that it was hopeless to look for supplies from Kalat, he turned a deaf ear to all croaking and gave orders to advance on the morrow. Cotton reverted to the divisional command of the Bengal infantry, Willshire was set over the whole of that of Bombay; and Nott, to his great indignation, was left at Quetta with only one battalion of his own brigade, another of the Shah's infantry, and detachments of cavalry, to guard the lines of communication. The commissariat departments of both presidencies were placed under a single head. The engineers were sent forward to prepare the road over the Khojak pass, fifty miles to the north-west; and on the 7th of April the march began. It was ominously heralded by a patter of musketry, signifying the execution of sixty unfortunate horses which could drag themselves no further.

The way lay over an elevated plateau some fifty miles in breadth intersected by low ranges of minor

hills and a few inconsiderable streams, with rare villages and still rarer little towns, and presenting general dearth of food, forage, fuel and water. Since resistance might be expected from the wild predatory tribes, it was ordained that all baggage and camp equipment should move in rear of the columns, which, as the heat was steadily increasing, signified considerable discomfort for the troops. But this was a small matter compared to the scarcity of food and forage. The cavalry horses continued to die, and the survivors were in such wretched condition that they were unfit for real work. Worse still, a commissariat officer, who was bringing forward a much-needed convoy through the Bolan, reported that he had been obliged to fight his way through the most difficult portion of the defile, and had lost, through fatigue and bad forage, eight hundred camels, with their loads, between the Indus and Sar-i-ab. However, there was nothing for Keane but to struggle on, repelling the occasional onslaughts of plunderers; and on the 14th of April he began the ascent of the Khojak pass. Three tracks had been prepared, more or less, for traffic by the engineers, that in the centre for the guns, that on the left for camels, that on the right, which was roughest of all, for bullocks, ponies and men. Both the ascent to the summit and the descent from it were extremely steep and difficult, and on no one of the tracks was there room for camels to pass except in single file. Yet, through the mismanagement either of Keane or of his staff, three regiments of infantry, as many of cavalry and two batteries of horse-artillery, together with the baggage of general head-quarters, divisional head-quarters and of the infantry brigade, besides the field-commissariat and grain-cattle, were all expected to pass through the defile and make a march of five miles on either side of it within twenty-four hours.

1839. April 14.

The result was dire confusion. The infantry-brigade and the baggage marched at 3 A.M. and were

1839. soon in difficulties. The steep ascent daunted many riders, and the descent even more. Camels fell and blocked the way, until they could by some means be removed. The defile, after twelve hours of desperate exertion, was hopelessly choked, and orders were sent back to the cavalry not to leave camp. But their baggage was already in the pass, and belated efforts to turn their camels back increased the anarchy and the chaos. Night closed upon a seething mass of men and beasts, without food or water, pent close along four miles of narrow track.

April 15. On the 15th the cavalry brigade marched at 3 A.M., and, to its consternation, came unexpectedly upon the tail of the infantry-brigade's baggage, still stuck fast. Thousands of animals, hardly able to move after thirty-eight hours of standing or crawling, were jammed hopelessly together; and the baggage-officers, some of whom had been on duty for twenty-six hours without food or drink, were wearied out. The troopers, dismounting, hove some of the worse obstructions out of the road. The press from the rear was stopped; the wretched camels and drivers ahead were goaded on with the lance; and then the whole of the Sixteenth Lancers, dismounting, set themselves to bring the first battery of horse-artillery to the summit. The poor, weak, exhausted horses by some means or another were forced up; and, though one gun went over the edge of the road, and rolled, team, drivers and all over a low precipice, the only damage done was the smashing of one wheel, which was presently replaced. Stripped to their shirts, the men toiled on unceasingly, and at length, after nine hours of cruel work, the cavalry-brigade descended into the plain, near the foot of the pass. But there the only water offered to them was so foul that the horses would not touch it; and Brigadier Arnold, representing that at all risks he must move on, obtained from Keane permission to march again on the morrow.[1] Accord-

[1] Fane, i. 111.

ingly, on the morning of the 16th the cavalry brigade started off, and after a long and distressing march struck a tank and a little cultivated ground fed by the river Kadanai, where it halted in comfort at Dandi Golai. 1839.

Keane, meanwhile, was tied to his head-quarters at Chaman, near the foot of the pass, until the rest of the Bengal division should have passed through the defile of the Khojak. On the 16th every man of the First Infantry Brigade that could be spared was sent to fatigue-duty at the pass, and on the 18th the Fourth Brigade took its place to help in bringing over the siege-train. With all their labour they could pass but one eighteen-pounder and two large mortars over the precipitous hills in the course of the day, and it was not until the 21st that the rear of the Bengal division at last came down into the plain. No accurate account of what it lost in the defile could ever be compiled, but it included vast quantities of baggage, tents and camels, fourteen barrels of powder, twenty-seven thousand rounds of musket ammunition, and unknown quantities of supplies. April 16. April 18. April 21.

On the 18th, however, Keane advanced his head-quarters to Dandi Golai, and on that same evening the water-supply fell short, the tribesmen having built a dam across the upper waters of the Kadanai to intercept it. A party was sent up to turn the water back into its own channel; but it occurred to no one to place a guard so as to prevent the water from being cut off. Indeed, the tribesmen seem to have done very much what pleased them with the Bengal division. They carried off five of the head-quarters' camels during the march of the 18th, and on the 19th they murdered twelve followers and stole two elephants belonging to Shah Shuja and Macnaghten. On the 20th the water-supply was again cut off, again reopened and once more cut off; and on the 21st Keane moved forward ten miles with the cavalry brigade and Second Infantry Brigade to Kila Fathulla. There no water

1839. but a salt spring was to be found, and, the thermometer standing at noon at over one hundred degrees Fahrenheit, the distress among men and cattle was very great.

April 22. On the 22nd Keane pushed on another twelve miles to Mel Manda, where, after a time, plenty of good water was discovered. None, however, was at first offered to the cavalry brigade but a little foul stuff which the horses could not touch; and Brigadier Arnold, representing the matter to Keane, obtained his leave to move on at any cost. He therefore led his brigade in advance for twelve more terrible miles. Men and animals were hardly able to drag themselves on from thirst, and the Sixteenth Lancers travelled afoot, goading their horses forward with their lances. At last a patch of cultivated ground came into view along the banks of the river Dori; and at the sight of the water men and horses made one mad rush into it and drank and drank insatiably. Fortunately, the river was everywhere at least three feet deep, so that there was enough for all;[1] but it may be doubted whether any discipline could have withstood the test to which these men were subjected. They had been practically without water for two days, and without food for one day, and they had marched for hours under a burning sun. Fifty-nine horses were reported dead at the close of the march, while many more were unfit to go further, and no fewer than ninety men of one regiment went into hospital. In fact, this march gave the finishing stroke to the starved horses and overworked men of the cavalry brigade.

April 23. On the next day the Second Infantry Brigade and the artillery moved to Takht, encamping by the bank of the Dori, where they were joined by the cavalry brigade before 4 A.M. on the 24th, for there were reports that the chiefs of Kandahar were coming out to fight. On the 23rd, however, a deserter from among those chiefs came to make his submission to Shah Shuja and to report that the rest had fled; and

[1] Fane.

therewith Macnaghten, without a word to Keane,[1] hurried Shah Shuja forward to Kandahar. The Shah's reception was not cordial, for it was realised at once that he was a mere puppet in British hands, and that the advent of the British host must cause scarcity and raise the price of provisions. However, the childish vanity of Macnaghten in parading himself as the person nearest to the King, was duly gratified, since for two whole days he had His Majesty all to himself. On the 26th Keane and the troops with him entered the city; and the Fourth Infantry Brigade and the siege-artillery came in four days later. The long journey was over, and the Bengal division had reached its goal at last, with just two days' supply of half-rations in store. They had marched, since they left Ferozepore on the 10th of December, just over one thousand miles in one hundred and thirty-seven days. The troops had been on half-rations for the past twenty-eight days, and the horses had subsisted on green forage, always scanty and often very bad, for twenty-six days. The health of the men had suffered from their great exertions at the Khojak pass, from the subsequent heat, from inadequate nourishment and from bowel-complaints, due to the enforced drinking of saline water. If the Barakzai chiefs had offered resistance before or near Kandahar, Keane must have met them with the enfeebled men of his infantry and artillery only, for his cavalry was, for the time, absolutely unfit for service. And even now, neither men nor horses could count upon sufficiency of food. There was indeed a good crop of corn, ripening but not yet ripe, and there was great plenty of fruit and vegetables, which were the more welcome since many soldiers were sick of scurvy; but fruit in large quantities is not the best diet for half-starved men. There was also sound abundance of green forage, but this again is not the best food for exhausted animals, and, since barley and grain were scarce, the horses were 1839.

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 9 of 1839, Keane to Auckland, April 26, 1839.

1839. April. little better off than before. As to the camels, their numbers had been so much reduced that none could be spared from the army to fetch provisions from Dadhar. Altogether the prospects at Kandahar were not of the brightest. The only remedy that Keane could think of was to take the whole business of supply out of the hands of the political agents, who after spending enormous sums had failed along the whole line of one thousand miles to collect adequate magazines, and to place it in the charge of his far more efficient commissaries. This was the first step towards the emancipation of the army from the paralysing incubus of political control.[1]

Meanwhile the Bombay division, after receiving its supplies at Gandava, had marched thence for Dadhar, where it arrived on the 5th of April, not without loss of camels by theft on the way. The heat at Dadhar was by this time extreme, and there was consequently much sickness. On the 9th, the artillery and the Seventeenth Foot entered the Bolan pass and found both water and air unspeakably poisoned by the thousands of rotting carcases that encumbered the defile. The remainder of the division followed, and, though not seriously attacked, lost camels at every stage by theft. Between the 15th and 20th the column reached Quetta, and pressed on with the least possible delay to the Khojak pass. Two days were needed to carry the artillery through that obstacle; and on the 4th of May the division entered Kandahar, having lost one-fifth of its horses dead, a vast number of camels worn out or stolen, and some hundreds of camp-followers murdered. In actual fighting the casualties in both divisions did not exceed forty killed, most of these being officers and men who had been reckless in wandering far from camp alone or in small parties. The losses of the marauding tribesmen of all descriptions was set down at about five hundred killed between the Indus and Kandahar.

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 9 of 1839, Keane to Auckland, April 19, 1839.

The heat was now very great, and, with the reaction of rest after many weeks of toil and hardship, sickness increased among the troops at large, and among the British in particular. There was some effort to make good the casualties among the troop-horses with native animals, and to gather in fresh camels for transport; but camel-stealing soon began round Kandahar, and when some of the thieves—Afghans—were caught and sentenced to be hanged, Macnaghten, on behalf of the Shah, intervened to protect them. Moreover, the marauders who stole camels were quite ready to murder unwary individuals, as one or two British officers discovered to their cost. "The country round Kandahar," wrote Keane, "is as full of robbers as Kach Gandava; and the King's name goes for nothing outside the palace gates, unless backed by an overwhelming force. Robberies and murders go on daily and nightly, and, as my correspondence with Mr. Macnaghten will show, I am precluded from doing justice to those who look to me to protect them and the property of the government."[1] 1839. May.

The question of supplies, again, was still urgent. There was none too much grain to feed both the inhabitants and the army, which of course tended to raise the price. Shah Shuja, thereupon, against all Macnaghten's remonstrances, fixed the cost of corn by his arbitrary will, whereupon the price instantly rose to more than double of its former rate. Frightened by this result, he revoked the order, but too late.[2] On the 11th of May some of the followers broke into riot and plundered the merchants in the bazaar; and, though the ringleaders were sternly punished, the incident did not endear the expedition to the Afghans. The transport of provisions from the base was also unsatisfactory. On the 7th of May a convoy, nominally of two thousand camels, came in from Shikarpur,

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 14 of 1839, Keane to Auckland, June 23, 1839.

[2] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 9 of 1839, Macnaghten to Indian government, May 2, 1839.

1839. May. purporting to carry nearly three hundred tons of grain; but, owing to mismanagement and the rascality of the native agents, not above one-fifth of that quantity reached Kandahar. And meanwhile Auckland in India was calmly writing instructions that Kandahar must not be left with less than six months' provisions for troops and followers, and that no movement from thence must be undertaken with less than six weeks' full rations at starting. To do the Governor-general justice, he was sedulous in ordering convoys of provisions to proceed to the front, but he did not realise that to start a convoy on the plains was one thing, and to bring it safely through the passes was another. He was an excellent, but simple gentleman.[1]

Military operations of any serious kind were for some time impossible. The Barakzai chieftains, upon leaving Kandahar, had fled to Girishk, seventy miles to westward; but, though Shah Shuja was urgent that they should be pursued, it was not until the 11th of May that a mixed column of seventeen hundred men could be sent thither under the command of Sale. Even this small force could not be collected without taking detachments from seven different units, including a few heavy cannon from the siege-train, nor could it carry more than twenty days' victuals at half-rations. Happily the chiefs had taken flight from Girishk before the arrival of Sale; and, having left some of Shah Shuja's contingent to occupy the fort, he returned with the remainder of the column before the end of May to Kandahar. The army was destined to linger there for yet another month before it could find means to move.

Meanwhile, there was much trouble on the lines of communication. When Keane advanced from Quetta there was what Auckland described as an "uncontrolled rush" of officers from the plains to the hills. Every one wanted to be at the front and no one to stay behind. A major of the Thirty-seventh Native Infantry, who

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 9 of 1839, Auckland to Keane, June 3, 1839; Keane to Auckland, June 26, 1839.

had been left with three companies at Dadhar, boldly brought them forward without orders, and was promptly sent back with public rebuke; and, to show that he was no respecter of persons, Keane deliberately set down Colonel Dennie at Shikarpur and Nott at Quetta, each with no very important body of troops under his command. At Sukkur was Brigadier-general Gordon, who held the chief command in Upper Sind; but everywhere there was some political officer to help or to interfere. One of them, Lieutenant Eastwick, at Khairpur, early in May wrote alarming accounts of the defencelessness of the lines of communication. There were, he said, too few troops at Shikarpur, none at Bagh, only two companies at Dadhar; in fact the whole line from Shikarpur to Quetta was unoccupied —all of which stirred frantic agitation in the breast of Auckland, and drew from him such a letter to Keane as nearly caused a rupture between them.[1] 1839. May.

Keane had told off two brigades of infantry to guard his immense lines of communication, but, as he truly said, if he had been able to add a third brigade to them, the route from Shikarpur to Quetta could never have been secured against the attacks of the marauding tribesmen, who, as was suspected, rightly or wrongly, were hounded on by the Khan of Kalat. The remedy adopted by the political agents—and there was some sense in it—was to enlist the marauders themselves as police; but the agents marred all their services by interfering with the military officers. Thus Eastwick quarrelled with a captain for marching up to a marauders' fort and, upon being fired upon, storming it out of hand; Eastwick's argument being that the real offenders might have fled, and the occupants of the fort might have been harmless individuals. This tendency of political agents to prescribe to military officers the manner in which they should perform their duties led to a good deal of friction; and a battle royal between

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 11 of 1839, Eastwick to Indian government, May 8, 1839.

1839. May. Mr. Ross-Bell, the political agent for Upper Sind, and Brigadier Gordon, who declined to take military orders from him, was decided by Auckland in favour of Gordon.[1] All this made for insecurity on the lines of communication; and another great difficulty was that, owing to the calls for transport at the front, few of the standing posts had camels enough to enable them to move even for a short distance to punish or overawe marauders. There was, moreover, always uncertainty as to the fidelity of the Amirs of Sind to their engagements. At the beginning of June it seemed very probable that they would rise, in which case every British post in Sind, with the exception of Sukkur, would have been in the greatest peril, and all irregular troops raised by the British among the Baluchis would certainly have joined their countrymen.[2]

A terrible factor in Sind was the heat, which was telling with frightful effect upon the detachments and convoys that passed up from Bukkur to Dadhar. The latter place was such a furnace that there was a Mohammedan saying, "Oh Allah! Wherefore make hell when thou hast made Dadhar?" yet it was inevitably the halting-place for troops after traversing one hundred and fifty miles of burning desert. Even at Shikarpur Colonel Dennie complained that in his tent—the best and largest in the camp—the thermometer rose to one hundred and twenty degrees Fahrenheit; and this was only in April. At the end of that month he moved up to the Bolan pass and arrived there safely; but two British officers, who followed him, died of heat in their tents, "their bodies turning as black as charcoal." On the 3rd of May he started to escort two batteries of Shah Shuja's artillery and six or seven hundred camels through the pass, and had to fight his way in intense heat for ten consecutive days

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 9 of 1839, Gordon to Mil. Sec., May 14, 1839; vol. 12 of 1839, Correspondence of Gordon and Ross-Bell, July 18, 1839.

[2] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 9 of 1839, Ross-Bell to Indian government, June 9, 13.

along the whole length of the defile. Having with him but four companies of native infantry, he could not spare the men for continuous flanking-parties, and would hardly have brought his convoy through without the timely, though accidental, reinforcement of three companies more. The exertions of the sepoys in dragging the guns through the pass were beyond all praise, for their sufferings from want of water were extreme. Many died, and under an officer less able and inspiring than Dennie, the whole might have abandoned work and hope, and perished under the knives of the tribesmen.[1] 1839. May.

Further to the rear, a convoy of treasure and stores, under escort of a wing of native infantry and of detachments, marched from Shikarpur on the 23rd of May and lost six out of fourteen European officers dead from heat. Two only were fit to proceed beyond Quetta, and they left behind them one hundred sepoys and at least three hundred camp-followers dead. Cholera, as well as heat and thirst, attacked this unhappy escort; and the memory of the sun, "turned to a ball of red-hot copper" by the dust of the desert, seems to have haunted the memory of the survivors to the day of their death.[2] In the first week of June a native officer and nine sepoys died in one day at Mirpur, while on the march across the desert; and, of a party of fifty Europeans under an officer, which started from Bukkur for Shikarpur, the officer and nine men died outright within two days, and many others collapsed under the sun. And the heat spared men as little in camp as on the march. In the middle of June Ross-Bell reported the detachments at Sukkur, Shikarpur, Bagh and Dadhar as fourteen hundred and thirty sepoys strong, nine-tenths of them unfit for duty; and this was at a moment when the Amirs of Sind threatened to rise. Beyond all question some at least of these tragic details must have been

[1] Dennie's *Personal Narrative*, pp. 56-60.
[2] Seaton's *From Cadet to Colonel*, i. pp. 118-158.

1839. June. reported to the Indian government, yet so little was the truth realised that we find Auckland writing, as late as the 3rd of June, that the route by Shikarpur would soon be closed by heat and that he was looking for another. There was honest zeal, goodwill and loyalty in the poor man, but not a vestige of that essential quality in one who makes war—imagination.[1]

Meanwhile at Kandahar things went on as before. Money was scarce, grain was scanty, and only sickness and theft of camels abounded. The Shah's pardon of the robbers who had been condemned by Keane to be hanged produced its natural effect; and the men who guarded the camels were slack and unwatchful.[2] On the 8th of June a convoy of treasure arrived; and on the 10th Keane issued orders to march on the 15th. Macnaghten had long been urgent for an advance, and on the 7th of June he advised Keane to leave the whole of the Bombay division at Kandahar and take only the Bengal troops to Kabul; setting forth that trouble might indeed arise at Kalat or Herat, but that no opposition was to be anticipated at Kabul, nor on the road thither. Keane at first assented to this proposal; but, thinking over it again, consulted the shrewd and sensible engineer, Thomson, who reminded him that the General and not the envoy would be held responsible for any military mishap, and put the pertinent question whether the information hitherto furnished by Macnaghten and the political agents had proved trustworthy or not. This touched Keane on a tender point, for the political agents had failed him throughout both as intelligencers and as commissaries, as he had predicted that they would. He now not only changed his intention concerning the Bombay division, but informed Macnaghten that he meant to form an intelligence department of his own. "There is no such thing at present," he wrote, in effect. "I have never seen the like in any army.

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 9, Auckland to Keane, June 3, 1839.
[2] Hough, p. 115.

The Indian government differs from others, and tries to do more by policy and negotiation than by the sword. You have given me every assistance, but, after I leave this, I feel it will be proper for me to have my own intelligence department." Macnaghten, to his credit, readily acquiesced; and a second step was thus taken towards delivering the military from political bondage.[1] 1839. June.

Before the 15th, however, arrived Auckland's letter, already mentioned, forbidding the army to start from Kandahar with less than six weeks' full rations in hand. It was, therefore, necessary to await the arrival of a convoy of about four thousand camels, carrying grain, which had passed through Dadhar on the 24th of May. Keane had sent back two parties to help to speed it on its way; the second of which, under a native leader of irregular cavalry named Azim Khan, had with great zeal and resolution defended it against several attacks in the Bolan and Khojak passes. On the 23rd of June some three thousand camels toiled safely into Kandahar. Their load amounted to about one month's supply for the army on half-rations (no one ventured to think in terms of full rations for this luckless army), and as Keane had not at Kandahar transport sufficient to carry more than five weeks' victuals at full rations for the Europeans and half-rations for sepoys and followers, this reinforcement of camels was very welcome. He ordered the army to march on the 25th; but now came a sudden and, to the political gentlemen, wholly unexpected difficulty. The merchants who had brought the convoy refused to proceed further. Macnaghten, after much pressure, persuaded them to sell him two thousand camels at a high price; but the merchants backed out of the bargain at the last moment; and the camel-drivers, without whom the camels were useless, on their part, declined to accompany their animals, whether pur-

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 10 of 1839, Macnaghten to Keane, June 7, 10; Keane to Macnaghten, June 10, 1839.

1839. chased or not. Thus, after losing twelve days, Keane was fain after all to store the newly-arrived grain in Kandahar, and to march off without it.[1]

The garrison left at Kandahar consisted of two batteries of artillery, a battalion of Bengal native infantry, in all about eight hundred strong, and a battalion, a squadron and a horse-battery of Shah Shuja's contingent. In Kandahar also were deposited the four eighteen-pounders which had with such enormous labour been brought through the Bolan and Khojak passes, and which formed the sole and entire battering-train of Keane's army. How the general was brought to commit this blunder, it is difficult to divine. The chief of the artillery did indeed urge that the bullocks were unequal to the labour of dragging these pieces; but this, in face of the fact that the guns had already travelled from Ferozepore to Kandahar, was ridiculous. Macnaghten, again, represented that Ghazni, the only fortress on the way to Kabul, was weak and could be breached by field-guns; but Keane knew perfectly well that Macnaghten's information was nearly always incorrect and valueless. The probability is that Keane gave way to a fit of temper, having just about this time received Auckland's upbraiding letter concerning the lines of communication, which irritated and hurt him exceedingly. But to account for a very grave mistake is not to excuse it.[2]

June 27. On the 27th accordingly, Keane marched for Kabul, with the native troops still on half-rations and the followers upon quarter-rations. The army moved in three columns at one day's interval; the first consisting of head-quarters, with the cavalry division, three batteries of artillery and one brigade of infantry;

[1] Durand, p. 164; Hough, pp. 126-128; *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 14 of 1839; Keane to Auckland, June 26, 1839.

[2] I have been unable to find Auckland's letters of the 27th, 28th and 29th April, and know their dates and the purport of their contents only from Keane's answers. The order to leave the siege-guns at Kandahar was issued on June 1. (Hough, p. 112.) Keane's first angry answer to Auckland is dated June 3.

the second of the remainder of the Bengal troops; 1839.
and the third of the Bombay force; the whole amounting to about seven thousand eight hundred fighting-men. The moon being favourable the troops started soon after midnight. No enemy was encountered, though two bodies of mounted Ghilzai tribesmen hung about both flanks of the columns throughout the ninety miles from Kandahar to Kalat-i-Ghilzai, which was reached by the leading column on the 4th of July. July 4.
After one day's halt there, Keane continued his advance with little incident beyond the occasional theft of a camel until the 17th, when, grain being abundant, the soldiers actually received full rations. On the 19th, when approaching Ahmed Khel, the advanced guard met a small party of hostile horse, whereupon Keane ordered the rear columns to close up by forced marches; and on the 20th the entire host was assembled at Nani, within one day's march of Ghazni. It numbered, besides the Queen's and Company's troops, two thousand of Shah Shuja's contingent and two thousand undisciplined Afghans levied by him, or about twelve thousand combatants in all, with forty guns.

On the 21st the army advanced in three parallel July 21.
columns, the artillery on the road in the centre, the cavalry in open column of troops on its right, the infantry in column of companies on the left, and Shah Shuja's cavalry thrown out wide to the right of all. Macnaghten persisted that there would be no resistance at Ghazni nor elsewhere, and Burnes, just as the fortress came into sight, reported to Keane, upon the information of an Afghan, that the place had been evacuated. Keane, who was riding ahead of his troops, therefore pushed on, until a few shots from some gardens within half a mile of the walls warned him that the suburbs were occupied. After some skirmishing the enemy was dislodged from the gardens, but a fire of cannon from the walls showed that Ghazni was held; and, after the staff and engineers had made their reconnaissance, the horse-artillery meanwhile

1839. plying the battlements with shrapnel, Keane withdrew
July 21. his men out of range and encamped. The works were now seen to be far more formidable than had been reported. Ghazni was a fairly regular quadrilateral, with sides about five hundred yards long, broken by a number of circular bastions of the usual Oriental type. The walls had been repaired, and the gates, so far as could be seen, had been built up. Light artillery could produce no effect on them, and, as Keane's battering guns had been left behind, a regular attack was out of the question. An escalade was, likewise, impracticable, the parapet being sixty to seventy feet above the plain. Mining, once again, could not be thought of, because there was a wet ditch before the parapet. Indeed, no operation that required the least time was feasible, for Keane had no more than three days' food left with him. Unless the army was to perish, Ghazni must be taken somehow and taken at once.

The situation was very grave, and Keane had only himself to thank for it. But Afghanistan is the land of treachery, and thereby Keane was saved. A nephew of Dost Mohamed, who had recently through disaffection deserted his cause, gave information that the Kabul Gate on the north side had not been built up, and his report was confirmed by the sight of a horseman entering it from the Kabul road. Thomson, therefore, presented to Keane two alternatives. Dost Mohamed and his army were represented to be only five or six marches to north of Ghazni; and, if the General advanced and beat him in the field, it was tolerably certain that the fortress would open its gates. If this could not be, then the only chance was to blow in the Kabul Gate and carry Ghazni by surprise, an extremely hazardous enterprise, and likely, even if successful, to be very costly. Unable to make even four marches from want of supplies, Keane was driven to adopt the more desperate course.[1]

[1] Durand, pp. 174-175.

Accordingly at 4 P.M., he set his troops in motion to circle round by the east from the southern to the northern side of the fortress, executing the movement in two columns for greater expedition. Practically, however, the manœuvre resolved itself into a night march, which is not generally a rapid one, particularly when men and beasts, both alike for months underfed, have already traversed several miles of rough ground. The result was that, after much confusion, the troops took up their position on a line of heights to north of the city between 10 P.M. and midnight, and there bivouacked, hungry, weary and shivering; while the sick, the baggage and the supplies, after long and helpless floundering in the dark, settled down wherever they found themselves for the night. Such was the disorder that the baggage did not reach its appointed place until noon of the 22nd; and it should seem that this ill-advised and hasty scramble was due to Macnaghten's intelligence—as usual incorrect—that Dost Mohamed had started from Kabul on the 16th, and on the 22nd would be within a day's march of Ghazni. 1839. July 21.

All through the night there was a dropping fire from the ramparts of Ghazni, with flickering blue lights and answering flickers from the hills to eastward. The enemy was evidently on the alert, and had good reason to be. Keane, never dreaming that the secret would be divulged, had imparted his plans to Macnaghten, who promptly passed them on to the Shah's army, so that already on the evening of the 21st they were the common talk of the Shah's camp.[1] At 11 A.M. on the 22nd, bodies of Ghilzai horse and foot began to stream down the hills on the east, and the whole of Keane's cavalry division was turned out to meet them. Had the enemy been permitted to come down well into the plain they might have been severely punished; but, being checked too soon by fire of shrapnel and by the charge of a few squadrons, July 22.

[1] Durand, p. 175.

1839. July 22. they took to flight before they had suffered serious loss. But for this trifling affair, the Afghans gave no further trouble that day; and Keane, after personal reconnaissance of the gate and walls, was able to perfect his plans, as follows.

The horse- and field-batteries were to move forward at midnight and take up, before dawn, positions within three hundred yards of the Kabul gateway, and from thence along the north-eastern front of the fortress. Three companies of native infantry and a regiment of native cavalry, were at the same time to make their way to the southern face, where the infantry were to make a demonstration of a false attack. For the true attack, the storming-party was composed of the light companies of the Queen's, Seventeenth and Hundred and Second, and a flank company of the Thirteenth, the whole, two hundred and forty men strong, under Lieutenant-colonel Dennie. It was to be followed by the main attacking column of the Queen's and the Hundred and Second, with the rest of the Thirteenth deployed as skirmishers upon both flanks and with the Seventeenth in support, the whole under Brigadier-general Sale. The skirmishers above mentioned were to be in position and under shelter by 12.30 A.M., so as to keep down any fire upon the engineers who were charged with the duty of blowing in the gate. The remainder of the infantry were formed into a reserve under Cotton. All troops were to assemble and move to their posts in dead silence. The assault and the false attack were designed to take place at 3 A.M.; and the signal for the onslaught was to be the bugle-call "Advance," sounded by order of the chief engineer as soon as he could ascertain that the entrance was practicable.

The preliminary movements went forward without a hitch of any kind. The weather was highly favourable, with a high and gusty wind which helped to drown the noise of tramping columns and rumbling guns; and, by a singular chance, the Afghans, lulled

into false security because disappointed of the assault that they had expected on the previous night, took no notice of any sounds. This was but one of an incredible series of accidents. The first streak of dawn had barely showed itself when Captain Peat and Lieutenants Durand and Macleod, with a few engineers, moved quietly with bags of powder towards the gate. Within one hundred and fifty yards of it their approach was discovered; blue lights were burned, and a heavy fire was opened from the upper ramparts. They had to cross a bridge of masonry over the ditch, which was commanded by low outer works. Had these been occupied, not a man of the party could have reached the gate. But not a shot was fired; and they passed over unchecked and unhurt. Peat with a few men occupied a sally-port, until that moment unknown, which gave them shelter, and Durand and his men quietly laid three hundred pounds of powder in twelve bags against the gate, and edged their way back, hugging the foot of the wall, as they had come. The skirmishers of the Thirteenth on the other side of the ditch were meanwhile answering the musketry which had begun from the upper ramparts; the British batteries had opened fire, and along the whole circumference of the fortress the defenders showed their alertness and bewilderment by continuous flashes of flame. 1839. July 23.

Amid all this hubbub, Durand and Sergeant Robertson coolly uncoiled the hose—a cloth tube full of powder—which was attached to the lowest bag of powder, and which, once again by the merest accident, proved long enough to reach to the sally-port, where both of them took shelter. Fortunate it was for them, for the Afghans by this time had leaped on to the parapet, and were not only shooting straight down to the foot of the wall but hurling bricks, stones and every kind of missile also; and, by a strange fatality, Durand and his sergeant only with difficulty and delay were able to kindle the slow-match. At last it burned steadily,

1839. and the two slunk away to be out of reach of the
July 23. explosion.

Meanwhile Peat, fearing that both of them had been killed—as but for the length of the hose and the shelter of the sally-port they must have been—came up to see what had happened, when the whole charge exploded, throwing him down so violently as for a time to stun him. Recovering himself, with superb coolness he went into the gateway to see if it were clear, but failed to perceive the sky through it, and before he could make closer examination, he was driven out by swordsmen. Durand, confident that the gate must have been demolished, tried to find a bugler to sound the advance; but Peat's own bugler had been killed, and Durand asked in vain for one from the nearest parties of infantry. In despair he hastened to the storming column, but tripped and fell so heavily over a grave of masonry that, being weak from illness, he could hardly move when he rose. Now fortunately he met a brother engineer, Broadfoot, who had been sent forward by Thomson; and Broadfoot, hearing from him that all was well, hurried back to Dennie, who at once led forward his four companies to the gate.

Meanwhile Peat, staggering back towards the main column, had collapsed on the way, and, being there found by Thomson, reported that he had been unable to see daylight through the gateway. Sale, who was close by, overheard the conversation, and, before Thomson could correct him on the strength of Broadfoot's report, ordered his bugler to sound the retire. The call was caught up by the whole length of the column in rear, and Keane, in deep anxiety, sent an aide-de-camp to ascertain the cause. Before this messenger had gone far, however, Thomson had made Sale understand his mistake; the bugles sounded the advance, and the main column rushed on. By that time Dennie's four companies were practically masters of the place, and Sale on entering the gate met the full tide of fugitives from Dennie's bayonets. In the

first rush these desperate men checked the main column for a few minutes. Sale himself was overthrown and only narrowly escaped with his life. But the men quickly recovered themselves and pressed on; the reserve followed them; and, though there was still some little resistance from a few brave and resolute men, it was easily overcome. In a very short time city and citadel alike were in the hands of the assailants, and Ghazni, by native tradition impregnable, had fallen. 1829. July 23.

The casualties did not exceed seventeen killed and one hundred and sixty-five, including eighteen officers, wounded. The brunt of the loss naturally fell upon the British, and chiefly upon the few companies of the storming-party; the light company of the Hundred and Second counting four officers and twenty-seven wounded out of sixty-two of all ranks present. But the truth is that as soon as the red-coats were fairly inside the fortress, resistance, as usual, collapsed; and if Sale had not been so hasty in sounding the retreat —a proceeding which seems absolutely unpardonable— but had followed the storming-party up closely, the success would have been even less costly than it was. However, Dennie had given great offence to Keane at Shikarpur by protesting against the withdrawal of his transport for the Bombay division; and Keane, who seems to have been very remote from an amiable character, gave, in his official despatch, all the credit to Sale. He magnified the exploit to the utmost, devoting to it many more words than Wellington had found sufficient to describe the Waterloo campaign; and Sir Robert Peel, later on, characterised it as "the most brilliant achievement of our arms in Asia." Allowance must be made for the enthusiasm as well as for the ignorance of politicians when they speak of military matters, but this eulogy is quite ridiculous. The British had been accustomed to walk into Indian fortresses as a matter of course for more than a century and a half; and before Bhurtpore alone had they recoiled in permanent defeat. Only for the weary

1839. march of twelve hundred miles that preceded it did the storming of Ghazni deserve commemoration by a medal.

None the less, it is not pleasant to contemplate the probable fate of Keane's army if the attack had failed; and he deserves credit at least for the promptitude with which he accepted the risk of what certainly seemed a desperate venture. On the whole, accidents turned in his favour. The shameful indiscretion whereby Macnaghten imperilled the success of the enterprise actually turned to Keane's advantage by kindling a false alarm among the garrison on the night of the 21st, and lulling them into a false security on that of the 22nd. There was good luck, too, in the facilities, unforeseen in any way, which the engineers found ready to their hand when preparing to blow up the gate. On the other hand, the precipitate and wholly unjustifiable retreat of Sale might have wrecked everything; but this is only the first of many instances in which Sale, notwithstanding his general reputation as a hero, showed himself a thoroughly bad officer. We may sum up the whole incident by pronouncing that Keane was very fortunate in escaping, with a blaze of triumph, the consequences of his gross blunder in leaving his siege-guns at Kandahar. The storm of Ghazni cannot excuse him for deliberately and unnecessarily hazarding disaster to his army, and therewith the stability of British rule in India.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE capture of Ghazni, to all outward appearance, accomplished the object of the British expedition at a stroke. Afzul Khan, son of Dost Mohamed, who was in command of the Afghan troops that had menaced Keane on the morning of the 22nd, took to flight immediately upon hearing of the fall of the fortress, abandoning his elephants and camp-equipage. Within twenty-four hours Dost Mohamed himself received the news at Kabul, and took his measures for the defence of the capital. By an extremely fortunate coincidence Colonel Wade, with his native levies and Sikh allies, had advanced from Jamrud to enter the Khyber pass on the very day of the assault on Ghazni. He had at first made no very great progress, not mastering Ali Masjid, the key of the defile, until the 25th, at a cost, during the three days, of some two hundred casualties. Dost Mohamed's main army, under his son Akbar Khan, was prepared to resist Wade further within the pass; but, after the fall of Ghazni, Akbar Khan received orders from his father to evacuate Jalalabad, and fall back at once upon Kabul, leaving Wade free to pursue his way through the defile unmolested. On the 28th an emissary came in from Dost Mohamed to Ghazni tendering his submission to Shah Shuja on condition that he should hold the office, hereditary in his family, of chief adviser to the new sovereign. The proposal was at once rejected by Macnaghten, who would grant no more favourable terms than "honourable asylum in

1839. July.

1839. July. the British dominions," or, in other words, dignified captivity in India. The Afghan negotiator, refusing even to listen to such a suggestion, took his leave and rode back to Kabul, where Dost Mohamed, having his army by that time under his hand, took up a position at Argandeh, a few miles to west of the city and astride the road from Ghazni.

Keane, meanwhile, halted for a week after his success; and, since the fortress was found to be fully provisioned for a siege, was relieved of further anxiety as to supplies. The troops actually received full rations; and, heartened by this unwonted luxury, they marched on the 30th for Kabul, the Bengal division leading, and the Bombay force and Shah Shuja's contingent Aug. 1. following one day in rear. On the 1st of August Keane reached Haidar Khel; and here came to him the momentous news that Ranjit Singh had died on the 27th of July. On the 3rd he halted at Sheikhabad to allow the rear to close up, where he received authentic tidings that Dost Mohamed had fled from Kabul, heading westward over the mountains for Bamian. Treachery had shown itself in the Afghan chief's camp; and, after a lofty but vain appeal to his perfidious followers, he had dismissed them with contempt and ridden off with a handful of true men to await better times. Keane at once sent a party of native horse, with twelve British officers under the supreme command of Outram, in pursuit. Beyond doubt these would have overtaken and captured the fugitive Amir, had they not been thwarted continually by the wiles of a traitorous guide; but on reaching Bamian on the 9th of August, they found that their quarry was thirty miles ahead of them, and were fain to abandon further chase.

Keane, meanwhile, had at once pushed a detachment of cavalry upon Kabul; and on reaching Maidan on the 4th, these found large numbers of Afghans drawn up to salute Shah Shuja. Another day brought him to Argandeh, where Dost Mohamed's guns, twenty-three in number, lay still in position but

abandoned; on the 6th the army encamped three miles west of Kabul; and on the 7th Shah Shuja made his formal entry into the city. Vast crowds were present to witness the spectacle, but there was no demonstration of welcome, much less of enthusiasm. There, for the present, he was established on the throne of Afghanistan. The British troops, after a weary march of fifteen hundred miles, had reached their goal at last; and Keane could assume with some justification that the object of their enterprise had been attained.[1] 1839. August.

Food was abundant and cheap at Kabul; and, both troops and followers being at last properly nourished, matters became more cheerful. On the 3rd of September Wade's column, escorting the Shahzada Timur, after a bloodless march from Ali Masjid through the Khyber pass, entered the city with pomp and display; and on the 17th Shah Shuja held a durbar, which all British officers off duty were required to attend. The poor creature, at the instance, presumably, of Macnaghten, but certainly of some member of the British mission, had been persuaded to institute an order of the Durani Empire, graduated, like the Order of the Bath, into three classes; and this distinction he was pleased to bestow upon some sixty officers of all ranks from the Commander-in-chief to the subaltern. It is humiliating to record that many welcomed the grant of this miserable bauble, while not a few took offence because it had been denied to them. For the rest, the British officers, as is their wont, got up a race-meeting which lasted for five days; and so lightly passed the first six weeks of the army's stay at Kabul. Sept.

Auckland in his manifesto, published before the war, had pledged himself that when once Shah Shuja had been secured in power, and the independence and integrity of Afghanistan had been established, the British should be withdrawn. According to the reports of Macnaghten, Shah Shuja was a mild, humane, intelligent, just and firm man, whose only

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 9 of 1839, Keane to Auckland, Aug. 8, 1839.

1839. Aug. faults were a pride that made him pompous and inaccessible, and parcimony, which is seldom an endearing virtue. Moreover, his reception by the Afghans at Kabul had been, if the same authority were to be believed, "with feelings nearly amounting to adoration."[1] This being so, the obvious conclusion would have seemed to be that the British should presently evacuate Afghanistan. The Shah had his own disciplined force, well armed, under British officers; the occupation of Kabul, Ghazni and Kandahar gave him a very firm hold on the country; and the not remote approach of winter, which practically forbade all armed unrest, promised him time to conciliate the most powerful of the subordinate chieftains. For the Amir was not and could never be an absolute autocrat. He was rather the head of a group of semi-independent nobles, of a proud and turbulent aristocracy, which could only be kept in loyalty and obedience by a mixture of tact, firmness and, at times, ruthless severity. Whether Shah Shuja possessed this rare combination of gifts was another question; but if, as Macnaghten averred, he were both able and popular, then the sooner that he were left to stand by himself the better.

One thing at least was certain—that he could not be supported for ever by British bayonets. The number of troops required for effective military occupation of Afghanistan was far greater than India could spare, for not only was anarchy in the Punjab inevitable, now that Ranjit Singh was dead, but the state of affairs both in Nepal and in Burma was by no means free from menace. Again, communication with Afghanistan was both difficult and uncertain, looking to the doubtful friendship of both Sikhs and Sindians and the assurance of attack upon all convoys by the wild, plundering tribes of the mountains. Lastly, the cost would be prohibitive and the waste necessarily enormous. Left to himself at once, Shah Shuja might possibly maintain his

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 10 of 1839, Macnaghten to Indian government, June 6, 1839; Durand, p. 190.

rule unaided. But, if he leaned wholly on the British battalions, and governed wholly by the advice of a British envoy who knew nothing of the country and of the people, then it was certain that his rule would be hateful to the Afghans, that his popularity, if it existed at all, would be short-lived, that if British troops remained in the country they must be too few to repress a general insurrection, and that when they were withdrawn, as sooner or later they must be, the whole fabric of Shah Shuja's domination must come down with a crash. 1839. Aug.

Macnaghten, however, could not or would not perceive these things. Over many good and commendable qualities his vanity and visionary ambition reigned supreme. Practically, he felt himself a king, and a king with an armed force under his command; and an armed force was to him a plaything as irresistible as is his first pocket-knife to a schoolboy. The whole of Central Asia lay before him with unknown possibilities, and even provocations, that he should do great things. At Herat, as has been already told, there had been a rupture between the British residents and the principal minister, Yar Mohamed, at the end of 1838; and though Pottinger, the chief resident, was presently invited to return, the other member, Colonel Stoddart, had proceeded on a mission to Bukhara. It was not long before Pottinger was again insulted; and Yar Mohamed began then to intrigue both with Persia and with the Afghans of Kandahar. The British occupation of Kandahar, however, had so wrought upon him that he had sent a friendly mission to Macnaghten while the army was halted there. Thereupon Macnaghten had despatched a new envoy to Herat in the person of Major Todd, with instructions to negotiate a subsidiary treaty of the usual kind, and to offer money, of which Yar Mohamed was prepared to absorb any amount, in furtherance of the same. But Yar Mohamed was not to be trusted; and Macnaghten was never quite free May 15.

1839. Aug. from the idea that a garrison ought to be sent to Herat to secure it against Persian aggression.[1]

Next, there was the question of Kalat. As to this, Macnaghten had made up his mind on the march from Kandahar to Ghazni. The political agents agreed with one accord that Mehrab Khan was responsible for the innumerable robberies, murders and raids suffered by the British on the march from Shikarpur and Quetta, and Macnaghten decreed that he should be punished by the annexation of Shawal, Mastung and Kach Gandava (or in other words, of most of the country west of a line drawn from Shikarpur to Quetta), to the dominions of Shah Shuja, and that, unless he came to Kabul to pay homage to the Shah, he should be deposed. The enforcement of this measure, if necessary, could be left to any troops that might be returning to the Indus; but the annexation would, of course, widen the bounds of Macnaghten's own dominion as adviser to the Shah.[2]

This, however, was a small matter compared to three events which turned Macnaghten's eye in deep apprehension towards the Oxus. In the first place, Colonel Stoddart had been imprisoned at Bukhara upon his arrival there in December, 1838, and some measures must be taken not only to effect his release, but to vindicate the insulted honour of Britain. Next, Dost Mohamed himself had fled in that direction, and the neighbouring chieftains must be stirred up against him and warned against harbouring him. Lastly, it was reported by Pottinger from Herat that a Russian force was assembling at Orenburg for a march upon Khiva; and this might mean a Russian advance upon Turkestan or upon Herat. Indeed the British chargé d'affaires at Erzeroum had written to Palmerston that a Russian occupation of Khiva would be a deep

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 9 of 1839, Macnaghten to E. Pottinger, May 3; to Todd, May 15, 1839.

[2] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 12 of 1839, Macnaghten to Indian government, July 6, 1839; Ross-Bell to ditto, Aug. 31, 1839.

injury to England, and would bring Bukhara, Balkh, Badakshan, and the whole line of the Oxus under Russian domination, thus drawing British and Russian territories so close together that the Hindu Kush would become the natural boundary between Russia and Afghanistan. Altogether the peril to the newly-won realm of Shah Shuja seemed to be great upon every side, and Macnaghten, as envoy and minister to that forlorn potentate, could not but accept the responsibility also of guardian and protector.[1] 1839. Aug.

In the circumstances, Macnaghten and Keane decided that upon military and political grounds a brigade of regular British troops should be kept at Kabul, and detachments at Kandahar and Mastung, while the Shah's troops should hold Ghazni and Girishk; allowing three battalions of Bengal infantry, three of cavalry, and the whole of the Bombay troops to return to India. This was approved by Auckland upon the condition that Nott should command the troops at Kandahar, Quetta and Mastung. The Governor-general judged Kandahar to be the most important military post in Afghanistan, and, though Keane had humiliated and disparaged Nott, he himself recognised Nott as a strong and capable officer. This was the more creditable to Auckland since Nott was a cantankerous man who abhorred political agents and all their ways, and was, on that account, naturally unacceptable to the circle dominated by Macnaghten. Had Auckland possessed the strength to follow his instincts, he might, as shall be seen, have averted many evils; but at least he insisted that the line from Quetta to Kandahar be under the control of Nott.[2]

This arrangement as to the troops had hardly been decided before it was overset. Macnaghten, being

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 14 of 1839, Justin Skeil to Palmerston, July 17; Macnaghten to Indian government, Aug. 24, 1839. The first news as to the Russian advance came in a letter from Pottinger at Herat, July 2, 1839.

[2] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 13 of 1839, Keane and Macnaghten to Auckland, Aug. 24; Auckland to Keane and Macnaghten, Sept. 12, 1839.

1839. Aug. now practically in supreme control of all affairs, was obliged to scatter his political agents far and wide, in order to carry out his policy and to keep him in touch with the march of events all over the dominions, real or nominal, of Shah Shuja. The first thing to be done was to drive Dost Mohamed as far as possible from the border; and to this end Macnaghten borrowed Dr. Lord, a medical officer attached to Wade's staff, and sent him on a mission to Morad Beg, chief of Kunduz. Lord was instructed to intimate that, in a general way, Morad Beg might feel assured of peaceable retention of his territory, but that, if he allowed Dost Mohamed to remain in or near them, Shah Shuja's army might be compelled to march into Kunduz to expel the dethroned Amir by force, in which case the Shah's officers might find it hard to distinguish friends from foes. It is somewhat singular that the political agents, who were always trying to conciliate robbers and marauders on the line of march by bribes, leniency and soft words, were very free with threats to the rulers of neighbouring states; and it is still more remarkable that the Governor-general should have encouraged them in this policy.[1]

Lord started accordingly, but, when still within thirty-six miles of Kabul, returned hastily with the report that all the country before him was in rebellion, and that Dost Mohamed, with all the peoples west of the Hindu Kush at his back, was marching to the reconquest of his kingdom. The whole story was a fiction invented by Lord's Afghan escort, who felt disinclined to the hardship of facing the mountain-passes at a time when the snow of an early winter had already begun to fall; and Macnaghten, when he discovered this, was somewhat annoyed. But Lord, when he set out again, made amends for this little lapse. He boldly pressed for the re-annexation of all the country between the Hindu Kush and the Oxus

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 14 of 1839, Macnaghten to Indian government, Aug. 25; Auckland to Macnaghten, Sept. 19, 1839.

to the kingdom of Kabul, an enterprise which even Macnaghten hesitated to undertake without reference to the Governor-general. When, however, Lord, having arrived at Bamian, declared that Khulm had been made a focus of agitation by Dost Mohamed and that it was essential at once to push troops on thither, within fifty miles of the Oxus, Macnaghten readily opened his ears. His idea was to send two battalions of Bengal native infantry and a regiment of native horse to Khulm, whence they should pursue Dost Mohamed, liberate Stoddart from Bukhara, forestall the Russian battalions on the Oxus, and make themselves, in a word, generally useful in forwarding Macnaghten's wild schemes. It is said that when he submitted this plan to Keane, the general would not trust himself to write his answer, but sent a verbal message declining to have anything to do with it.[1] Later, however, he did condescend to give Macnaghten some reasons. Without mentioning that it was a serious operation to penetrate some fifty miles of mountain-range by passes rising to ten thousand feet and more above the sea, he pointed out that those passes would be open for only two months longer, and that any troops sent over them would be isolated for six or eight months, without any certainty of being fed, since it was impossible at the moment to send victuals for that period with them. He also objected to despatching British troops over the Hindu Kush at all, stating that the Shah's troops, if any, were those that should undertake the duty; and finally he contended that if it were absolutely necessary for British troops to go so far north, they must wait until the following spring, and then march in respectable strength.[2]

1839 Sept.

Macnaghten, however, was not to be defrauded of

[1] Durand, p. 200.

[2] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 15 of 1839, Macnaghten to Indian government, Sept. 3; vol. 1 of 1840, Macnaghten to Keane and Keane to Macnaghten, Sept. 29, 1839.

1839. Sept. his military experiments by any such considerations as these. By alarming Keane with the spectre of Dost Mohamed, he obtained his consent to the detention of the whole of the Bengal division in Afghanistan, and then set about a little operation of his own. If he could not push British troops on to Khulm, he could at any rate order some of the Shah's contingent to join Lord at Bamian; and accordingly, on the 10th of September, he issued instructions to Captain Hay to march for that place on the morrow with one of the Shah's Gurkha regiments, two hundred of the Shah's horse, three thousand irregulars and a troop of Bengal horse artillery, and on arriving at his destination to place himself under the orders of Lord. As the route prescribed to him included the traversing of two passes, each over twelve thousand feet above the sea, an officer suggested two days' delay to await the return of an engineer who had been sent to report upon it; to which Macnaghten replied loftily that he did not like the raising of difficulties. After this it was hard to put forward any further objection. Hay's detachment at Bamian was supposed to depend upon Kabul for its supplies, although the passes would be closed by snow during the winter months, already not far off; but if Macnaghten chose to believe that they would be open, there was nothing more to be said. So Hay marched on the 11th, as the great Macnaghten had ordained, and after a month of desperate toiling and fatigue covered the hundred miles to Bamian, in order, as an officer, then at Kabul, has recorded, "to lodge an excellent battery of artillery in a place where it could not be of any use." [1]

Having thus taken his measures to "drive Dost Mohamed beyond the Oxus"—for in this light Hay's march was represented to Auckland, and not only accepted but heartily approved by him [2]—Macnaghten turned his mind to the castigation of the principal

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 15 of 1839, Macnaghten to Hay, Sept. 10, 1839.
[2] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 15 of 1839, Auckland to Macnaghten, Oct. 30, 1839.

offenders who had, or were asserted to have, impeded the progress of the army from the Indus to Kabul. The first and less important of these were certain refractory Ghilzai chiefs between Ghazni and Kandahar, against whom Outram marched from Kabul on the 7th of September with a mixed force of the Shah's contingent and Abbott's field-battery. The second and great culprit was Mehrab Khan of Kalat. The original idea had been to entrust the attack upon him to Nott, then Commandant at Quetta, whose force had by this time been increased to three native battalions, a few troops of cavalry and sixteen guns; and Nott had made every preparation for it. But this plan was overset by Macnaghten and Keane, who appointed General Willshire and the Bombay division to deal with Mehrab Khan on their homeward march to the Indus.[1] 1839. Sept.

Leaving Kabul on the 18th of September, Willshire marched by way of Ghazni and thence by a new route due south.[2] On the 8th of October he approached the country in the vicinity of Lake Ab-i-Istadu, where Outram was conducting his operations against the Ghilzais, and left with Outram a small detachment of all three arms. From this day forward the two worked more or less together against the Ghilzais, and on the 31st the troops of both marched into Quetta. Nott, fortunately, was no longer there. On the 13th he had received an intimation from Keane that he was to place his troops under Willshire's orders for the expedition against Kalat; and being a substantive major-general, whereas Willshire held only local rank, he had written a violent letter flatly declining to take any orders from Willshire. Had he been still at Quetta on the 31st, it is certain that, if any critical situation had arisen, he would not have co-operated Oct. Oct. 13.

[1] Stocqueler, *Life of Sir William Nott*, i. pp. 137-141.

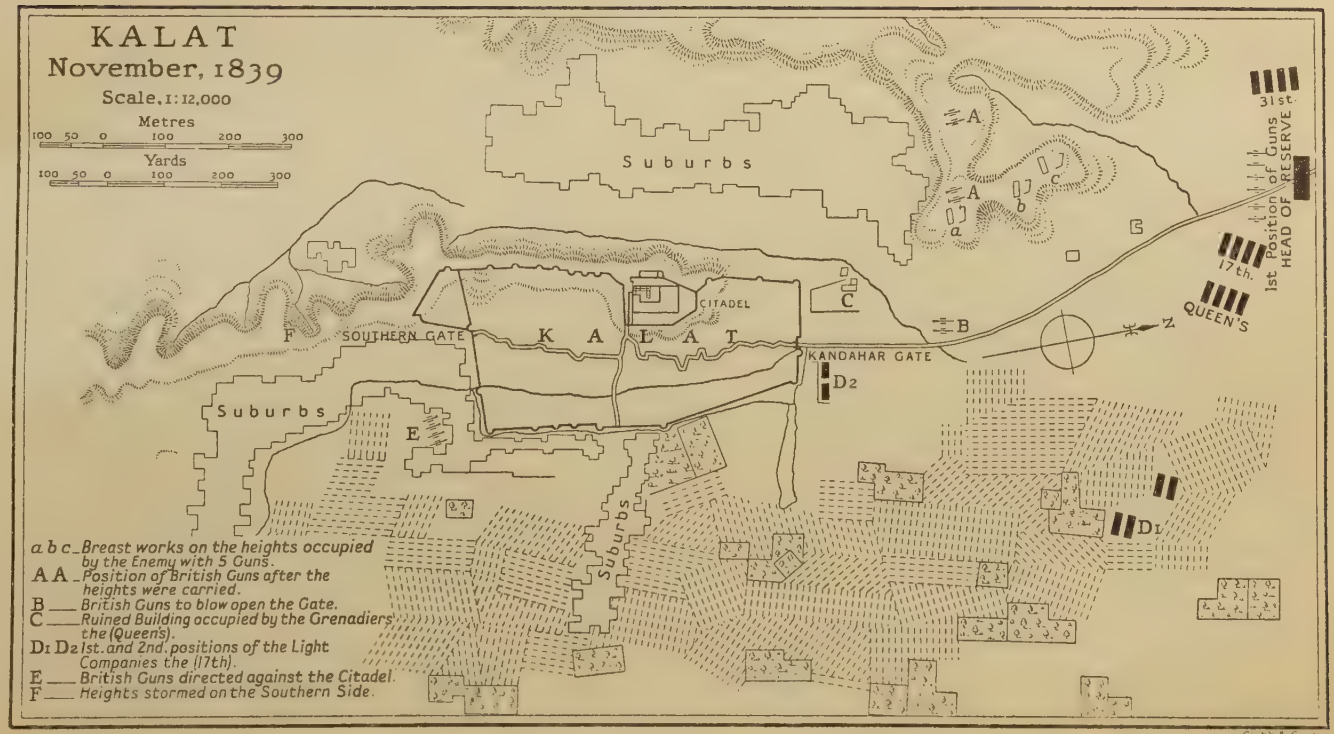
[2] 2 squadrons. H.M. 4th L.D.; det. 1st Bombay L.C.; 4th Local Horse; 2 troops of Horse Artillery; 1 field-battery; H.M. Queen's; H.M. 17th Foot; 31st Bengal N.I.

1839. heartily with Willshire, having already a grievance
Oct. against Keane, and being encouraged in recalcitrance by a sympathetic political officer.[1] However, on the 25th he had received a second message from Keane, bidding him move to Kandahar forthwith with half of his brigade, and, having marched on the 26th, he was safely out of the way.

Arrived at Quetta, Willshire found the place absolutely bare. Nott had in fact been greatly neglected. Though winter was approaching, there was no material to build huts for the troops, no straw for their bedding and very little fuel. There were no shoes to replace those worn out in service, no medical stores and no spare ammunition. Lastly, forage was so scarce that the camels, with their escorts, had to travel afield twelve miles to graze. In the circumstances, Willshire decided to send his cavalry and much of his artillery straight back through the Bolan pass to Gandava, keeping only his three weak battalions, six horse-artillery guns and a detachment of irregular horse for
Nov. the march on Kalat. On the 4th of November he set out, striking south-westward by way of Mastung, and by the 11th he was within two marches of his destination. A message had been sent beforehand to Mehrab Khan setting forth the terms upon which his submission would be accepted, and he had answered with defiance. In fact, he had called upon Willshire either to halt, pending further negotiations, or to meet him and his tribesmen in full force on the field of battle.

On the 12th Outram, who had now joined Willshire's force as a volunteer, led out an advanced party which struck against the enemy's vedettes; but the progress of the main body was practically unopposed,
Nov. 13. and on the 13th the column came within sight of Kalat about a mile away. The enemy's cannon opened fire; and upon reconnaissance, Willshire perceived that three hills to the north-west of the fortress were crowded with hostile infantry, which were sheltered

[1] Stocqueler, *Life of Sir William Nott*, i. pp. 143, 148.



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by three redoubts and supported by five guns in position behind breastworks. Halting the column until the baggage had closed up, Willshire placed the latter under guard of his irregular horse, meanwhile clearing some gardens on his left and dispersing, with a few rounds of shrapnel, a body of hostile cavalry which was hovering in the same direction. He then formed three columns of attack, each of four companies, from the Queen's on the left, the Seventeenth in the centre, and the Thirty-first Bengal Native Infantry on the right, which were to assault the three redoubts, and, if possible, to enter the fortress on the backs of the fugitives. Willshire had about a thousand bayonets, and the Baluchis altogether numbered about twice as many; but it never occurred to him to hesitate in storming Kalat out of hand in broad daylight. 1839. Nov. 13.

All was soon ready. The guns were unlimbered in rear of the centre; the reserve was formed in rear of them, and presently the little six-pounders opened a very accurate fire of shrapnel at a range of about seven hundred yards. The assaulting columns advanced steadily, and so searching was the practice of the guns that the enemy, unable to bear it, retired to the fortress, endeavouring to drag their cannon with them. Willshire thereupon ordered the Queen's and Seventeenth to make a rush for the Kandahar Gate, at the northern angle, and to enter it, if possible, with the enemy. The rush was duly made, but the enemy made haste to abandon the guns and to secure the gate; whereupon Willshire brought up two companies from the garden towards the same gate, and bade the assaulting columns take such cover behind walls and ruined buildings as they could, until the artillery could advance. The battery was soon at the crest of the heights, and unlimbered in three divisions along the northern face of the fort. A few rounds sufficed to blow in half of the Kandahar Gate; the storming columns dashed in despite of a gallant resistance by the defenders; and Willshire sent a detach-

1839. Nov. 13. ment of his reserve round the western face of the fort to secure the heights on the southern side and cut off all retreat. These troops managed to enter the southern gate before the enemy could fasten it; and then the whole assaulted the citadel, where Mehrab Khan was leading the defence most bravely, sword in hand. He was overpowered and slain; and though isolated parties in isolated buildings held out until late in the afternoon, the enemy lost heart at length, and surrendered on condition that their lives should be spared. But the fate of Kalat had been sealed within two hours of the firing of the first shot.

This was a smart little affair, which cost Willshire thirty-one killed and one hundred and seven wounded, twenty-two of the former and forty-seven of the latter belonging to the Queen's. As this battalion numbered no more than two hundred bayonets, it may be said to have suffered heavily; and indeed, being exposed to a very sharp fire with very little shelter in the interval between the first rush to the walls and the blowing in of the gates, it underwent a trial which might have been too hard for a native regiment. On the whole the capture of Kalat was a more brilliant little success than that of Ghazni, where the number of men engaged was four times as great and the casualties only fifty more; though neither is really worth commemoration on regimental colours.

Having sent Outram to bear the news of his success to Bombay, Willshire returned by way of the Gandava pass and arrived at Larkhana on the 18th of December. His cavalry, meanwhile, had traversed the Bolan pass without molestation, but upon emerging from it found cholera raging at Bagh, and lost nearly sixty of its European soldiers before, on the 30th of November, it reached the Indus. A week after his arrival at Larkhana Willshire received orders to break up his division, which henceforward disappears from the main scene of operations.

Thus the question of Kalat was, for the time being,

settled; and the provinces of Shawal, Mastung and Kachhi were thereupon annexed to Shah Shuja's dominions. Having so dealt with foreign affairs to north and south, Macnaghten was at liberty to turn his attention to domestic matters. He had already blamed Shah Shuja's haughty bearing towards the Afghan nobles, and trusted that it might be replaced by greater condescension. Instead, however, of pursuing a policy of conciliation towards them, Macnaghten sought to repress them by raising levies of various tribes, which, as they were to be under the supervision of British officers and paid by the royal treasury, would, as he fondly supposed, be devoted to the Shah's cause. Thereby he alienated the nobles without gaining the attachment of the levies, who disliked the rigour of British discipline and were offended by subordination to foreign and infidel officers. This was in fact an experiment so dangerous that only an administrative pedant, wholly ignorant of the people with whom he was dealing, would have ventured upon it; for, whereas the weakness of the nobles was that they were at perpetual feud with one another, this oppressive measure tended to unite them in resentment against a common grievance. 1839. Sept.

To pay these mercenary levies it was of course necessary to raise money; and here Macnaghten, in his endeavour to prove that Shah Shuja was a king and no puppet, made a very fatal division of administrative authority. He left to the Shah the entire business of civil and criminal justice, and of the settlement, collection and appropriation of the revenue, but kept all that related to foreign affairs, and to independent or revolted chieftains, in his own hands. Above all, he retained supreme command of the Shah's armed force; and he alone ordered expeditions, settled the strength of detachments and gave instructions to their commanders as to what they were expected to do, and how they were expected to do it. To all intent, therefore, he gave the Shah all the powers of government except

1839. Sept. the employment of the police; with the result that the Shah was free to squander money upon favourites and to exert or authorise oppression as he wished, while the British, represented by Macnaghten, having alone power to enforce his will, had to bear the odium of his acts. The whole arrangement, in fact, was contrived to make both the Shah and the British as distasteful to the Afghans as possible, and to render the puppet only less odious to them than the power that pulled the strings.

There was another matter which kindled among the chiefs a burning hatred. Macnaghten sent for Lady Macnaghten to join him, and some military officers did likewise; but not a few of the British were better content to set up domestic establishments of a different kind in Kabul. The Afghan ladies, who pride themselves upon being fair, were, owing to other peculiar circumstances, very far from being inexorable to the strangers; and the fact was very quickly discovered. Burnes, in fact, during his first mission had given considerable offence by taking advantage of this failing; and, as he had not changed his character before his second visit to Kabul, his example was very readily followed. There was therefore great demand for houses in the capital; and the Shah confiscated and gave away the dwellings of absent nobles right and left, without a shred of compunction or a thought of the future. Already in the autumn there was hidden, but none the less perilous, fury in the city; and Keane, himself not the most delicate of men, was shrewd enough to note it. "I cannot but congratulate you on quitting the country," he said to Durand, who was returning to India, "for, mark my words, it will not be long before there is here some signal catastrophe."[1]

While thus provoking the wrath of every class of the Afghans, Macnaghten took long before he would decide where the British troops at Kabul were to be

[1] Authority for last three paragraphs, Durand, pp. 208-212; *From Sepoy to Subadar*, pp. 74-75.

lodged for the winter. The engineer, Durand, to whom the choice of a suitable place had been mainly committed, was strong for the military occupation of the Bala Hissar, or upper fort, which commanded the city, and whereof the citadel, if placed in a proper state of defence with a garrison of a thousand men and a few guns, could defy all the power of Afghanistan. The Shah, however, upon various pretexts, objected, and Macnaghten, while recognising the absurdity of the Shah's arguments, weakly gave way. Durand then appealed to Sale, who was to command the garrison at Kabul, and pointed out that, while it would be impossible to construct barracks outside the Bala Hissar before winter, there was cover enough within it to make the construction of good quarters easy. In the face of Sale's representations, the Shah reluctantly yielded, and Durand at once set to work to make the citadel impregnable. But again the Shah intervened, alleging that the measure would make him unpopular, and again the foolish Macnaghten bowed to his will. Durand then proposed that Macnaghten, who occupied two houses of Dost Mohamed within the Bala Hissar, should give them up to the European troops, since the envoy was intending to spend the winter with the Shah in the milder climate of Jalalabad. But Macnaghten had no idea of sacrificing his own importance and his private comfort for so trivial a public purpose as the lodging of a mere battalion of the line, and rejected the proposal with displeasure. Durand, therefore, suggested that the native troops should be housed in the Shah's stables, and the Thirteenth under temporary cover upon adjoining ground; and so the matter was arranged, Durand flattering himself that, once the troops were settled somewhere in the Bala Hissar, the repair and occupation of the citadel would follow as a matter of course. He reckoned without the vacillation of Macnaghten, though for the present the envoy was in full accord with his projects. Macnaghten's political designs for the government of Afghanistan were fatuous

1839. Sept.

1839. to the last degree, but his mistakes, if they showed him to have little insight or common sense, reflected no evil on his character. In the matter of the occupation of the Bala Hissar, however, he deliberately sinned against such poor light as was in him.[1]

Oct. So the autumn wore on. October came, and with it the time approached for Keane to withdraw from Kabul, with such few troops of the Bengal division as were not to remain in Afghanistan. This raised immediately the question as to his successor. Cotton was the officer next senior to Keane, who, together with Macnaghten, assumed as a matter of course that Cotton would take his place, and gave him instructions accordingly, emphasising the fact that Shah Shuja's army was absolutely under the envoy's command. The Indian government, however, went further and was careful to point out that Cotton's position and powers, now that the Shah was established on the throne, would be totally different from Keane's. The substance of the new instructions was as follows. The new Commander-in-chief would be uncontrolled in the exercise of discipline and good order, but "the disposal and employment of the force would be under political direction." The military authorities would, of course, be consulted in both matters; and "in the moving and cantonment of the troops, both military and political considerations would be attended to." It was therefore essential for the two departments to work cordially together, in respect not only of these points, but also of the employment of the troops in any military operations. As to these last, however, it was for the political officer to decide whether they should be undertaken, and for the Commander-in-chief to give his opinion whether they were practicable, and what would be the means required for their execution. As to the Shah's force, the envoy alone could be the channel for conveying to them the Shah's orders. When the Shah's, Queen's and Company's

[1] Durand, pp. 204-207.

troops were working together, the senior British officer was to command the whole; and the envoy would naturally communicate with him before issuing orders on the part of the Shah. But it should seem, though it is not expressly so stated, from the tenor of this last sentence that at any moment the envoy could overrule the orders given by any British commander to any of the Shah's contingent when actually in the field.[1] 1839. Oct.

The purport of this astonishing document has been given at some length, because it contains within itself the explanation of all our disasters in Afghanistan. Keane had been more than a little hampered by the encroachment of the political agents upon his authority, and, under the stress of active operations, had actually thrown off a shackle or two which they had imposed upon him; but now when, according to Macnaghten's delusions, the sovereignty of Shah Shuja had been joyfully accepted in Afghanistan, and all was peace, the military Commander-in-chief was deliberately shorn of all independent authority, and placed, together with his troops, under the heel of the civilian. How any self-respecting officer could have been content to accept the command upon such terms is not easy to understand; and indeed there seems to have been some difficulty about it. Auckland himself had no doubt that, after Keane's departure, Nott was the right man to succeed him in command of all the troops in Afghanistan; and he went so far as to write privately to Cotton, urging him to return to India and take charge of the forces in the Upper Provinces. Cotton took the hint, left Kabul on the 16th of October, and had actually proceeded as far as Ali Masjid when he received a second letter from Auckland which, as he put it, seemed to leave him no alternative but to offer to remain where he was. He made his offer accordingly, which was readily accepted,

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 1 of 1840, Indian government to Macnaghten, Oct. 28, 1839.

1839. and he presently returned as Commander-in-chief in Afghanistan.[1]

The whole transaction is obscure,[2] but Auckland's sudden change of mind as to replacing Cotton and keeping Nott in subordination to him admits of but one explanation—that Macnaghten was intent on holding the military commander in subjection to himself, and knew that Nott would not endure such a position. Possibly he may have been influenced by Keane, who had treated Nott ill and therefore hated him; possibly one or other of the clever young men about Auckland may have warned him that Nott was a difficult man and not likely to brook interference; possibly Nott's refusal to take orders from Willshire may already have become known to the Governor-general; by no possibility could the government of India have been unaware that Nott hated "politicals" with his whole soul.[3] Be that as it may, Cotton was

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 2 of 1849, Keane and Macnaghten to Indian government, Oct. 14; Auckland to Keane, Nov. 4, 1839; vol. 8 of 1849, Keane to Auckland, Nov. 5, Nov. 6 (enclosing letter from Cotton of Nov. 5), Nov. 15; Auckland to Keane, Nov. 15, 1839.

[2] Many essential portions of the correspondence are, as usual, wanting in the minutes of the Supreme Council of India. The preceding footnote shows how the letters concerning a single subject are scattered about whole volumes apart. In vol. 2 of 1849 it is recorded that Cotton is returning to India; in vol. 3, that he is conducting operations in Afghanistan; in vol. 4, that he has left Kabul, reached Peshawar and turned back to Kabul.

[3] The following incident shows that Nott had good reason for his hatred. On October 23, 1839, the resident at Quetta, a certain Captain Bean, ordered Nott to march to Kalat with a battalion, some local horse and three guns. Nott flatly refused to do anything of the kind, giving conclusive military reasons. Thereupon Bean complained to his immediate superior, Ross-Bell, and to Macnaghten in the following terms: "The responsible position I hold and the power delegated to me authorise (in my humble opinion) my calling for the aid of troops to effect any measure that may appear to me to be of importance to the State, and in this case I consider I was acting according to the views of the Right Hon. The Governor-general." This is a good specimen of the pompous and inflated style in which young political captains set forth their pretensions to give orders to generals; and it is no wonder that the generals found it insufferable. There were many as foolish

sent back to Kabul, and Nott was left as his inferior at Kandahar. Auckland made no more fatal blunder than this, which, tragically enough, was against his own better judgement. 1839. Oct.

It had been arranged that Keane should leave Kabul on the 15th of October, making his return journey through the Khyber pass, from the mouth of which the Sikhs had agreed to give his troops free transit across the Punjab. His force consisted chiefly of cavalry—the Sixteenth Lancers, Third Bengal Light Cavalry and a battery of horse-artillery—with no more infantry than two companies of sappers and miners and four of sepoys, besides invalids and drafts, both European and Indian; and it was expected that there would be no trouble with the tribesmen on the march. The Khyberris, indeed, were friendly to Shah Shuja, having helped him in the past, and welcomed his return; and the Shah, without consulting Macnaghten, had in gratitude promised them the handsomest scale of the blackmail which was paid by all Amirs to these tribes for safe passage through their defile. For the regular settlement of this matter the chiefs applied themselves to Wade, who had left Kabul on his return to Peshawar on the 5th of October; but Wade, having no instructions from Macnaghten, referred them to Captain Mackeson, a political officer, who, he said, would meet them at the eastern mouth of the pass and there arrange everything. Having seen Wade advance to Kabul at the head of an armed force with the Shahzada Timur under his protection, the chiefs took it ill that the satisfaction of their demands should be delayed and turned over to an inferior officer; and therewith they resolved to seize Ali Masjid and to close all traffic through the pass.

The garrison of Ali Masjid consisted of two com-

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and self-important as Bean, and there were some even worse. (*I.O.S.C.*, vol. 3 of 1840, Bean to Nott, Oct. 23; Nott to Bean, Oct. 24, etc., 1839.)

1839. panies of sepoys, reduced by sickness to five men fit
Oct. for duty, and some irregular infantry, most of whom were in an outlying post which was in every way an ill-chosen position. Upon these last unfortunate isolated men the Khyberris descended, swept them away, despite of a stout resistance, with a loss of three hundred killed and wounded, and then assaulted Ali Masjid. They were beaten back, however; and then, hearing of the approach of Keane, they hastened away to a safe distance. Keane duly approached with a vast train of baggage, which, being loaded on bullock-carts and worn-out camels, crept slowly and painfully in a long straggling line through the defile, and offered an easy prey to the tribesmen had they dared to attack. But they were awed by the fame of the conqueror of Ghazni and allowed him to pass unmolested to Ali Masjid,
Nov. where he halted on the 3rd and 4th of November to allow his column to close up. Mackeson, meanwhile, had begun his negotiations with the tribesmen; but the subsidy tendered by Macnaghten fell short of that promised by Shah Shuja, and the Khyberris waited only for Keane to make his way to Peshawar, before they again closed in upon Ali Masjid. It was imperative to throw a supply of victuals and ammunition into the fort; but this seemed to be no very difficult matter, for Keane was at hand at the mouth of the pass, and Shah Shuja and Macnaghten had recently moved, with two battalions of British and two of Afghan troops, for the winter to Jalalabad.

On the 10th of November, therefore, Keane detached half of his sepoys and fifty sappers, with eight hundred Sikhs, lent by General Avitabile from Peshawar, in support, to escort a convoy of stores to Ali Masjid. The column reached its destination, after some slight skirmishing, on the 11th. On the following morning the Khyberris tried to drive off the British camels while at graze, and were pushed back by the detachment; but, as this was not effected until the afternoon, the commanding officer decided not to

return until next day. Mackeson thereupon went out with the fifty sappers to inflict further punishment on the marauders, and had thrust them back some distance from camp, when it was observed that the commanding officer, without a word of warning, had set the main column on march to Peshawar. With some difficulty the sappers fought their way back to the rear-guard, which was also engaged, and then the two together retired, fighting steadily, upon the support of the Sikhs, who were in position in the pass. The Sikhs, however, no sooner saw them retreating than they were seized with panic and took to their heels, firing blindly at their friends, at anything and at nothing, and stabbing the camels that obstructed their flight. The entire convoy was thrown into confusion. The rear-guard and sappers only with difficulty extricated themselves, and the detachment returned, with no greater casualties, indeed, than twenty-two killed and wounded, but with the loss of over four hundred camels slain or carried off. 1839. Nov.

The tribesmen were naturally much encouraged by their success; and Keane judged it prudent to throw the whole of his infantry, except his sappers, into Ali Masjid until they could be relieved by troops from Jalalabad. The detachment marched accordingly on the 14th, overcame all resistance with little difficulty and occupied the fort; while Mackeson, arriving a few days later, renewed his negotiations with the tribesmen, who continued to beleaguer the post, and varied the monotony of the parleys by firing occasional shots into the British camp. Such was the state of affairs when Colonel Wheeler appeared upon the scene with two battalions from Jalalabad, and told Mackeson plainly that he would not endure such insulting behaviour on the part of the Khyberris but would attack them at once. This was just what was wanted at the moment, and Mackeson knew it; but having been charged by Macnaghten with the task of coaxing the tribesmen to complaisance, he obtained from Wheeler twenty-

1839. four hours' respite, and in the course of the night
Nov. brought them to terms by promising an annual subsidy of £8000, or just four times more than Dost Mohamed had ever consented to pay.

Accordingly, on the 22nd, Keane's detachment marched for the last time for Peshawar, escorting, with the help of Wheeler's battalions, a convoy of two thousand camels. The sight of the animals was too much for the Khyberris. Forgetting the newly concluded treaty, they swooped down from two lateral ravines upon the main defile and carried off a large number of them. But they had reckoned without Wheeler, who drove them off with considerable loss and recovered every camel that had not been hamstrung. The fact was that it was hopeless to think of controlling the Khyber pass by payment of blackmail only, for the money was necessarily made over to the chiefs, who kept most of it for themselves and left their followers to indemnify themselves by plunder. The alternative was coercion, but for this there were not sufficient troops; and, moreover, both Macnaghten and Mackeson were anxious, if possible, not to resort to force, if they could by any other means secure safe communication through the pass, because the operations would be very difficult, their success rather doubtful, and their failure, if misfortune should overtake them, most detrimental. Altogether, Macnaghten's first experiment in the handling of the mountain-tribes was not very encouraging.[1]

However, Keane was now at last free to leave Peshawar with the few troops that had marched with him from Kabul to return to Bombay; and henceforward he disappears from this history. It is not easy to make a just summary of his work in a campaign which he had no share in planning, and hardly a full

[1] Durand, pp. 213-221. *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 3 of 1840, Keane to Auckland, Nov. 10, 1839; vol. 6 of 1840, Macnaghten to Indian government, Dec. 2, 1839; to Mackeson, Mar. 10, 1840; Mackeson to Macnaghten, Mar. 3, 1840.

share in directing. His worst blunder was his failure 1839.
to join the Bengal troops and take the command out of Cotton's hands at the earliest possible moment; and, though many have pointed this out, not one has attempted to account for it. He was so unpopular that if there were some scandalous reason for his clinging so long to the Bombay division, some or other of the narrators of the first Afghan war would certainly have hinted at it; but I can discover nothing of the kind. Probably, therefore, it is to be explained by sheer laziness and shrinking from discomfort, for it was said by Keane's enemies that he appropriated no fewer than two hundred and sixty public camels for the use of himself and staff.[1] His peremptory orders to Cotton not to advance from Quetta were also ill-judged, and show some sign of petulance; and his final mistake in leaving his siege-guns at Kandahar was very serious. Any one of these three errors—and they were something worse than errors of judgement—might easily have wrecked the entire enterprise committed to him. On the other hand, no one can deny to him character, moral courage and resolution. He could have enriched himself and endeared himself to the whole army by forcing a quarrel upon the Amirs of Hyderabad and storming their city, and he might honestly have justified himself by pleading the danger of his communications through Sind. Yet, in loyalty to his civil chiefs, he was moderate and forbearing, and incurred no small odium with his troops. Again, when he joined the Bengal force at Quetta he found discipline slack and a discreditably querulous and despondent spirit abroad. In a day or two he restored obedience by a few severe examples, and cheerfulness and content by his own active influence. Lastly, by swift and unhesitating decision, he made good his culpable lack of siege-guns before Ghazni.

It must be said, further, that he behaved well to Macnaghten under exceedingly trying conditions.

[1] Kennedy, i. 187.

The supreme government of Calcutta, anxious to make the envoy the chief figure, hardly excepting Shah Shuja, in Afghanistan, had surrounded him with a pomp and circumstance which must have been galling [1] to a Commander-in-chief who, after all, bore the chief weight of responsibility. Yet Keane showed uniformly both loyalty and patience alike on the march to Kabul and during his stay there, curbing Macnaghten's eager ambition with firmness and tact, and gently putting aside the wildest of his extravagant schemes with a joke. More he could not do, looking to the limitation of his powers, though he clearly foresaw that disaster was inevitable. Upon the whole, though his mistakes disentitled him to the peerage which he received for this campaign, he proved himself worthy of his command.

[1] See the account of the gorgeous mounted messengers in the retinue of Macnaghten in Kennedy, i. 176.

CHAPTER XXV

KEANE having withdrawn from Afghanistan, Mac- 1839.
naghten was left with authority practically unfettered except by the distant Governor-general. Settled at Jalalabad with Shah Shuja for the winter, with military operations stopped for the present by the snow, he was at liberty to work out his great schemes for carrying the threads of his diplomacy from end to end of Central Asia, using his armed force, where necessary, for a needle. It is true that the said force was somewhat scattered, Jalalabad being the only station where as many as three regular battalions were collected together; but the envoy, as he had shown when he sent a battery to Bamian, believed in sowing the country with small detachments.[1] Moreover, the raising of irregular Afghan levies was going forward with apparent success. Leech and Bean, the residents at Kandahar and at Quetta, acting upon the principle that a reformed poacher makes the best gamekeeper,

[1] The distribution of the troops was as follows: *Kabul*, H.M. 13th L.I., 35th Bengal N.I., 3 field-guns; *Ghazni*, 16th Bengal N.I., 1 squadron Skinner's Horse; *Bamian*, Shah Shuja's Gurkha battalion, 1 battery Horse Artillery; *Jalalabad*, 1st Bengal Europeans (101st), 37th and 48th Bengal N.I., 2nd Bengal Cav., Shah Shuja's 1st, 2nd and 3rd Cav., Khyberri Corps; *Dakka*, Ghilzai Corps; *Kandahar*, 42nd and 43rd Bengal N.I., Shah Shuja's 2nd troop H.A., 2nd Cav., 2nd, 5th and 6th Inf.; *Quetta*, 1 battalion Shah Shuja's infantry, 2 guns. (*I.O.S.C.*, vol. 4 of 1840, Jan. 11, 1840.) This list differs slightly from that printed in Durand, p. 248, who places the 31st N.I. and a detachment of the Shah's artillery at Kalat, and a battalion of the Shah's infantry at Girishk, these troops being in the above list assigned to Kandahar.

1839. Dec. had enlisted some of the predatory tribes as police to guard the communications from the Khojak pass to the eastern mouth of the Bolan; and Mackeson was doing the like with the Khyberris. All seemed to be going well. The Shah's troops, owing to the resignation of General Simpson, had passed to the command of Brigadier-general Roberts, father of a little boy who was later to become famous, and himself a very capable officer, if Macnaghten would have deigned to consult him. The only jarring note came from Nott at Kandahar, who reported that one of his two regular regiments was very sickly, that the cavalry and infantry of the Shah's contingent which were with him were totally disabled by illness, and that, in the event of trouble, he would have only fourteen to fifteen hundred men at his disposal. He did not say that he expected such trouble, though he did add the warning that Shah Shuja's government at Kandahar was absolutely inefficient. But Nott was always finding fault, and neither the envoy nor the Governor-general thought his representations worthy of notice.[1]

Meanwhile, Macnaghten did not forget the defences of Kabul, but sent to Auckland an estimate of the cost of a thorough repair of the citadel. There was, he explained, no assault by a foreign enemy to be dreaded; but the measure was recommended by Cotton upon military grounds, and, from a political standpoint, was calculated to produce a good effect throughout Shah Shuja's dominions. Auckland, however, did not consider the need for these repairs so urgent as to justify the expense. The Governor-general was already alarmed at the enormous cost of the expedition, what with the huge loss of transport animals, the extravagance of the political agents and the incessant calls of Shah Shuja, which Macnaghten

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 1 of 1840, Leech to Macnaghten, Sept. 21, 1839; vol. 2 of 1840, Macnaghten to Mackeson, Oct. 12; Lieut. Bosanquet to Macnaghten, Oct. 1, 1839; vol. 4 of 1840, Nott to Macnaghten, Nov. 19; Indian govt. to Macnaghten, Dec. 1, 1839; Macnaghten to Mackeson, Jan. 9, 1840.

found it hard to refuse, for pecuniary aid. Auckland was so far justified in his decision that Macnaghten's glowing reports of Shah Shuja's popularity seemed to render the fortification of Kabul against internal enemies absolutely superfluous. None the less, this petty economy was a most fatal blunder.[1] 1840. Jan.

Unfortunately at this same time Macnaghten must needs seize an opportunity for displaying his talent as a military commander. The presence of British troops at Jalalabad had induced nearly all of the neighbouring chieftains to pay homage to Shah Shuja; but there was one among them, the chief of Kunar, who refused to do so. The valley where he ruled runs into the main defile of the Kabul river a little below Jalalabad, and is of considerable extent, running, indeed, up to Chitral and beyond it, but it was so wretchedly poor as to be valueless; and it really mattered very little whether the chief were nominally dependent or independent. Macnaghten, however, thought differently. The Indian government, at the beginning of the trouble with the Khyberri tribes, had pronounced that, if there were troops sufficient for the purpose, it would be well to send a punitive expedition, like that of Outram against the Ghilzais, to reduce them to obedience. As has been told, Macnaghten judged it more prudent to pay blackmail to the Khyberris, but he may well have thought that a little demonstration of his military power might have a wholesome effect upon them, and he accordingly decided to send a column to chastise the refractory chief of Kunar.

As the whole of the proceedings are instructive as an illustration of Macnaghten's military methods, they may be told in some slight detail. First, he wrote to Cotton, asking him what force he deemed adequate for the purpose, offering the use of some of the Shah's troops and sending a political agent, Captain Macgregor,

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 3 of 1840, Macnaghten to Indian govt., Jan. 11; Indian govt. to Macnaghten, Feb. 17, 1840.

1840. Jan. to give information to the general and to the officer who was to command the expedition. It so happened that Cotton had sent most of his camels down the pass to Dakka, some thirty miles east of Jalalabad, to bring in grain; and he was now obliged to recall them, which meant, of course, dislocation of plans, waste of camels' strength and three days' delay. However, the force was prepared; Lieutenant-colonel Orchard was placed in nominal command, with orders "to attend to all the instructions" of Macgregor, who was to accompany him; and the column[1] marched off, its objective being Pashat, a paltry fort not more than one hundred and fifty yards square, where the chief of Kunar bade the Shah defiance. The weather was unfavourable, rain being almost incessant; but after a march of fifty miles Orchard came before Pashat at dawn of the 18th of January, and with his guns battered down the outer gate of the fort. There was, however, an inner gate against which an engineer, Lieutenant Pigou, three several times lodged charges of powder to no purpose, the rain always weakening the explosion. Having expended the whole of the ammunition for his guns and lost sixty-eight killed and wounded, Orchard was fain to fall back, whereupon the chief quietly evacuated the fort and fled away.

The whole affair was, in fact, a failure, and, though this result was chiefly due to the weather, it was not the less serious upon that account. It must be noted that the military commanders had no voice as to the expediency, or otherwise, of despatching the expedition at all. That was the affair of Macnaghten, whom they were bound to obey. As a matter of fact, the weather was at this time so appalling that the country became impassable, and a convoy on its way to Orchard was stopped for at least twenty-four hours within two miles of Jalalabad. The probability, therefore, is that the men suffered considerable hardship, which meant

[1] Three nine-pounder guns, 20 sappers, 80 men of the 101st, 1 wing 37th N.I., 1 battalion Shah's infantry, Christie's Irregular Horse.

sickness, and that the loss of camels from exposure must have been serious, which meant inconvenience, more work for the remaining camels, more losses and more expense. Auckland, upon hearing the particulars of the expedition, deprecated the employment of British troops except for objects of permanent advantage. "It is important," he wrote, "that you should not seem to rely, for assertion of Shah Shuja's rights, upon the British army." But, unfortunately, Macnaghten, whatever the fair words that he sent to Calcutta, had nothing else to rely on. This was his first essay towards the two results which he finally accomplished, namely, to break the hearts and ruin the confidence of the military officers, and to teach the Afghans that the British might be resisted with success.[1] 1840. Jan.

But, if Macnaghten plumed himself upon his military talents, much more so did Dr. Lord, his agent at Bamian. Upon the arrival of Hay's force at that place Lord had discovered—what might have been ascertained before—that forage was scarce in the winter, and had sent back all his cavalry; but with the Shah's battalion of Gurkhas and his battery of horse-artillery he at once became busy. His first step was to intervene in a local quarrel between two petty chieftains in the valley of Saighan, and to displace, with little bloodshed, one whom he conceived to be in the interest of Dost Mohamed. This was at the end of November; and a week or two later came in news that Dost Mohamed had taken refuge in Bukhara, which was true, and that the ruler of Bukhara intended to help him to recover his lost kingdom, which was false, for that potentate had, as a matter of fact, thrown him treacherously into confinement. Lord, however, at once begged for a reinforcement of four companies to march over the passes in mid-winter; and not

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 2 of 1840, Macnaghten to Cotton, Jan. 11, 1840 (enclosing instructions to Macgregor); Cotton to Indian govt., Jan. 10; to Auckland, Jan. 22, 1840; Durand, pp. 248-251.

1839. content with three very defensible forts, in which his troops were housed at Bamian, he began to throw up an entrenched position. This done, he became dissatisfied with Bamian, and marching with a small detachment to Saighan, took over the fort in which he had lately installed his friend, and garrisoned it with two companies of Gurkhas. This fort, it should be added, was effectually commanded by a hill within musket-shot; so that even as an advanced post it was valueless, and as an isolated stronghold simply a trap. Finally, Lord became dissatisfied with the whole position unless it should prove to be the first step towards an advance into Turkestan. For that object Bamian, in his view, presented unexampled facilities, and, as he pointed out, the territory to south of the Oxus was the most valuable part of Shah Shuja's dominions.

It is a grave reflection upon the depth of Macnaghten's intelligence and the sanity of his judgement that he took all the foolish outpourings of this conceited and self-important doctor with the utmost seriousness. Dost Mohamed and the Russian advance upon Khiva possessed his brain to the exclusion of all other matters, save the extension of Shah Shuja's realm. When rumours came in that the Khan of Bukhara contemplated making Balkh over to Dost Mohamed, he trembled for the consequences without questioning the truth of the report. When Lord wrote grandiloquently that the choice lay between bounding Russian influence by the Oxus, or allowing it to reach within a few years to Bamian, it never occurred to him that from Orenburg to Khiva is eight hundred miles as the crow flies. Far from that, he deliberately wrote a letter advising an advance beyond the Hindu Kush for three principal objects, namely, to push the Khan of Bukhara out of all territory south of the Oxus, to compel him to liberate Colonel Stoddart, and—evidently as a sop to soothe Auckland's just alarm as to the cost—to pay the expenses of the expedition to Afghanistan. Auckland,

upon the first receipt of Lord's extravagant letters, had expressed anxiety, and, upon hearing of his raid upon Saighan, had written mildly that Dr. Lord's zeal needed moderation by Macnaghten's judgement; but Lord was only another Macnaghten in little, and the Governor-general was obliged to affirm roundly that he had no desire to assert Shah Shuja's rights in Turkestan, and declined to do so.[1] 1840. Jan.

With the return of spring, Lord again launched out into military operations. Forage for his horse-artillery battery could only be obtained from the Hazaras, who, though freely paid for it, naturally grudged the drain of the supplies which they had laid up for their own live stock. At length they refused to furnish more; and Lord sent a force against one of their strongholds, one tower of which was defended so desperately that it was only mastered by the slaying of every man within it. This, of course, bred ill-will not only among the Hazaras but among the neighbouring tribes; and Lord seemed bent upon multiplying opportunities for them to wreak their vengeance in the future. He had already split up his little detachment between Bamian and Saighan, and he now found a pretext for dividing it still further. Dost Mohamed, when he fled to Bukhara, had left his family at Khulm under the charge of his brother, Jabar Khan; and Macnaghten, wishing to hold hostages against Dost Mohamed's designs, was trying to persuade Jabar Khan to throw himself upon the protection and generosity of the British. Lord, thinking to hasten Jabar Khan's decision by showing him that Khulm was no secure resting-place, ordered a reconnaissance to northward, in the course of which a local chief offered to make over to him the little fort of Rajga, at the mouth of the defile beyond Kamard, some twenty-five miles north-east of Saighan.

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 5 of 1840, Lord to Macnaghten, Jan. 6; Macnaghten to Indian govt., Jan. 15, Feb. 25; Indian govt. to Macnaghten, Feb. 17, 1840.

1840. As a military post Rajga was faulty, but Lord, jumping at the occupation of any forward position, good or bad, at once accepted it, and urged Macnaghten to occupy it permanently. Macnaghten agreed; and three hundred Afghan levies, under Captain Hopkins, were sent up to reinforce Lord, who now pushed forward five companies of the Shah's Gurkhas to Rajga, leaving two at Saighan and one at Bamian. General Roberts was not consulted in the matter, for Macnaghten pressed his authority in command of Shah Shuja's regular troops to the utmost, and would suffer no interference from any one with the irregular corps. The envoy, indeed, seems to have become positively intoxicated by the joyful knowledge that he could send armed men whither he would to enforce his august will.

Apart from the vicious disposition of the troops, however, Lord's military promenades produced precisely the opposite effect to that which Macnaghten desired, by alarming every native chief between Bamian and the Oxus. The Khan of Kokan remonstrated with his brother of Bukhara against his treatment of Dost Mohamed, who had resisted the British aggressor that now threatened them all, with the result that Dost Mohamed before long effected his escape. The Wali of Khulm, being nearer to Lord, was even more frightened, and, as a natural result, even more sympathetic with Dost Mohamed. These petty potentates, who might have been secured as friends, were converted into enemies; and endless dangers were laid up for the future because a handful of political agents, headed by Macnaghten, could not deny themselves the pleasure of that delightful game which is known as "playing at soldiers."

During this time Cotton and Nott were corresponding amicably and soberly about the Russian advance upon Khiva, neither of them anticipating any movement of the Russians beyond the Oxus, but both dreading the effect of their approach upon unquiet

spirits in Afghanistan. Cotton was for concentrating as large a force as possible at Kabul in readiness to seize, if matters should come to the worst, the passes of the Hindu Kush. Nott, with more sober judgement, doubted whether without strong reinforcements it would be possible to hold even Kabul and the Khyber pass against a Russian army backed, as he believed it would be, by the majority of the Afghans.[1] Both generals, however, found that they had plenty of work in their hands without the Russians. The Ghilzais, that fierce and untameable race, whose country, following the line of the river Tarnak, ran from Kandahar almost to Kabul, had forgotten the sharp lessons that they had received the day before the storm of Ghazni and later at the hands of Outram; and in April they were busy on the road between Kandahar and Ghazni, intercepting the posts and wounding or slaying the messengers. Nott sent out a party of two hundred horse in the hope of seizing the leaders; but it was found that these leaders had assembled a considerable force about Kalat-i-Ghilzai, in order to sever communication permanently between Kandahar and Kabul; and Macnaghten realised the unpleasant fact that the Ghilzais, who at the best of times had never acknowledged the authority of any sovereign, whether at Kandahar or Kabul, were in open rebellion. 1840.

Accordingly, on the 7th of May, he called upon Cotton to furnish troops to aid Shah Shuja's levies in restoring order. Characteristically enough, he gave no information as to the nature of the service, and Cotton was obliged to ask for details as to the probable numbers of the enemy, the strength of their forts, the prospect of finding supplies in the country, and the means of feeding the troops if it were judged necessary to follow the tribesmen into the hills. In reply Macnaghten forwarded a memorandum from one of his underlings, Captain Peter Nicholson, who had been one of Auckland's aides-de-camp ; and this May.

[1] Stocqueler, *Life of Sir W. Nott*, i. 167-175.

1840. May. officer, having been entrusted by Macnaghten "with the settlement of the Ghilzai tribes" (as he modestly styled it), was prepared to co-operate with Nott in a spirit of gracious patronage and high condescension.[1] The memorandum set forth that the tribesmen numbered twelve thousand but probably could not put more than six thousand into the field, that their forts were so strong as to require siege-artillery, but that upon the mere demonstration of force the Ghilzais would probably submit without firing a shot. Finally, Nicholson averred that supplies and forage were abundant in the plain, a statement which experience proved to be false, and that there would be no occasion to follow the enemy into the hills. It is worth while to give these details, for the whole transaction is typical of the casual fashion in which Macnaghten and his minions approached military operations, and, by initiating them with the Shah's troops, forced the British officers to co-operate with them. Cotton could only reply that since Macnaghten's information was better than his own, he bowed to his decision, and would furnish a battalion of sepoys and two siege-guns; but he begged that Nott might take personal command of the whole.[2]

But while Macnaghten was thus elaborating his preparations, Nott, learning from his cavalry of the real state of affairs, on the 7th of May sent them reinforcements of a battalion of the Shah's infantry and four horse-artillery guns under the leadership of Captain Anderson. On the 16th of May Anderson, having his infantry and artillery on the road and his cavalry pushed out wide to right and left to feel for the enemy, came upon the Ghilzais, from two to

[1] See his very ridiculous letter to Nott of May 13, 1840. Stocqueler, *Life of Sir W. Nott*, i. 179.

[2] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 9 of 1840, Macnaghten to Cotton, May 7, 8; Cotton to Macnaghten, May 8, 9; Captain Anderson to Fort Adjutant, Kandahar, May 17, 1840. Nicholson's Memo. is printed in Stocqueler's *Life of Sir William Nott*, i. 181-183.

three thousand horse and foot, well posted in a strong position at Tazi on the left bank of the Tarnak. Feeling no great confidence in his foot, which was new and untried, Anderson decided to stand upon the defensive, and, choosing his ground with skill, plied the Ghilzai horse with an accurate fire of shrapnel until, unable to endure the torment longer, they advanced and swooped down upon his left flank. Twice they charged up to the bayonets, but the Shah's battalion, under three good English officers, stood creditably firm, while the grape-shot from the guns played havoc among the tribesmen. Before Anderson's cavalry could return, the fight was over and the Ghilzais had fled, leaving two hundred dead behind them; whereupon Anderson moved forward to Ulan Robat and there sat down in a strong position dominating the valley of the Tarnak. This was a sharp little affair and timely, for Nott discovered that in another two days the Ghilzais would have numbered ten thousand instead of three thousand, and that there was a plot at Kandahar to overwhelm the garrison as soon as Nott should have marched out, as it was considered certain that he must, with his two regiments of regular sepoys. The truth was that the Durani chiefs, who had expected much from the restoration of Shah Shuja, had realised that all power and influence was in the hands of the British, and were by this time thoroughly and permanently disaffected. But, though Nott was fully persuaded of this, Macnaghten would never have believed it; and the news of the action at Tazi seems to have come to Cotton as an unpleasant surprise, for, according to Macnaghten's intelligence, the country was quiet, or, according to Nicholson's opinion, would sink into repose at the first demonstration of force. Though, therefore, Nott had done already all that was immediately necessary, Macnaghten, thoroughly scared, insisted on sending out his detachment from Kabul and on dragging Nott from Kandahar to Ulan Robat to command it.

1840. May 16.

1840. June. With this force Macnaghten sent the heir-apparent, the Shahzada Timur, presumably with the object of conciliating the loyal affections of the people; but this prince brought with him a rabble of followers who fell upon the unfortunate inhabitants, robbing and plundering them with hideous cruelty, and, as Nott wrote, "doing all in their power to goad the people into open rebellion." As this oppression was exercised under the protection of Nott's troops, the sufferers naturally appealed to him, and Nott instantly made an example of some of the troops from Kabul who had caught the infection of rapine. But with the Shahzada's own people he prudently declined to deal, bidding the complainants carry their grievance to Nicholson, who, apparently unwilling to trench upon the august privileges of royalty, took no steps to obtain for them redress. So matters went on for a short time until Nott, dreading the effects of this lawlessness upon his own troops, after due warning took matters into his own hands, soundly flogged a dozen of the Shahzada's followers, and restored the property that they had stolen to its owners. It does not appear that the prince objected in the slightest degree to this action; but the ridiculous political agent, Peter Nicholson, construed it as an affront to his petty dignity and complained to Macnaghten. Macnaghten, taking up Nicholson's quarrel with childish readiness, referred the matter to Auckland. Cotton thereupon took up the cudgels for Nott, gave him the whole weight of his support and justified his conduct in every particular. Finally, Auckland, while unable to deny that the conduct of the Shahzada's people had been atrocious, was weak and foolish enough to write that he had "observed Nott's conduct with great regret and displeasure," and to hint that he was unfit for his command. In such infatuated fashion did governor-general, envoy and political agents labour strenuously for disaster.[1]

[1] For this episode, see Stocqueler's *Life of Sir William Nott*, i. 191-219.

However, for the moment the Ghilzais were overawed into the semblance of tranquillity. Nott sent a detachment to occupy Kalat-i-Ghilzai and to destroy petty strongholds between Kandahar and Ghazni, thus rendering communication safer; and by the third week in July he had returned to Kandahar. Soon afterwards Macnaghten fell back upon his usual method of securing peace upon the highways by paying the chiefs £3000 a year to abstain from troubling them; thus confirming the saying which had already become proverbial in Afghanistan, that the British rewarded their enemies and oppressed only their friends.[1] 1840. July.

Almost simultaneously with the rising of the Ghilzais, there was a dangerous menace to the British line of communications between Shikarpur and Kandahar. Captain Bean, the political agent at Quetta, had, as has been told, enlisted some of the tribesmen, namely the Kachhis, to east and south-east of the Bolan pass, to guard the line, while to westward it was hoped that all was made safe by the installation of Shah Nawaz Khan, as successor to Mehrab, at Kalat. With the political agent's usual conceit of his own influence and his own achievements, Bean, confident that all was well, had sent the Thirty-first Native Infantry back to India, without a word to Nott, retaining only two hundred and thirty bayonets of the Shah's infantry and two guns as the garrison at Quetta. There was, however, another tribe, the Marris, east of the road from Shikarpur to the mouth of the Bolan, which could not resist the temptation of plundering convoys; and to curb them Mr. Ross-Bell decreed that their principal fort at Kahan, about eighty miles east and north of Bagh, should be permanently occupied. Accordingly on the 2nd of May, Captain Brown, with three hundred sepoys, fifty horse, one twelve-pounder howitzer and from seven to eight hundred camels, marched from the advanced post of Pulaji, some thirty-five miles north-east of Bagh. The heat was May.

[1] Durand, p. 257; Kaye, i. 528.

1840. May. intense, the route was circuitous, and the difficulties of the Nafusk pass into the hills were so great that Kahan was not reached until the 11th. The fort, an irregular hexagon, was deserted, but the walls were so ruinous and weak that the defence depended mainly upon the six towers at the six angles. However, Brown strengthened the wretched place as best he could, unloaded the four months' provisions that he had brought with him, and sent his camels back for more. Since it had pleased Ross-Bell to place a handful of men in isolation at a distance of at least a week's march from any support, it was essential that the post should at least be well furnished with food.

On the 16th of May, therefore, Lieutenant Clerk started from Kahan to escort seven hundred camels back to the plain with one hundred and sixty bayonets and fifty horse. Being unopposed in the Nafusk pass and mindful of the weakness of Brown's garrison, he ordered half of his infantry back to Kahan; but no sooner was this party beyond reach of Clerk than it was surrounded by superior numbers and annihilated, one camp-follower alone escaping to carry the news to Kahan. Emboldened by this success the Marris set themselves next to intercept Clerk, who, being a gallant officer, attacked them without hesitation. But the odds against him were too great. He himself fell fighting hand to hand; seventy of his eighty sepoys were killed; and the Marris could boast that they had cut off one hundred and fifty regular troops and captured seven hundred camels.

The news spread like wildfire among the tribes. Even the Kachhis, for generations at blood feud with the Marris, rejoiced over their success against the aliens, and, while planning the destruction of Bean and his garrison, were careful to persuade him that more than ever they hated the Marris and were attached to the British. Nasir Khan, son of the slain and dethroned Mehrab, and his followers likewise saw visions of the recovery of Kalat and the deposition

of Shah Nawaz, who, without influence of his own, 1840.
leaned wholly on the detested political agent Loveday, June.
and his paltry garrison of sixty sepoys. Bean, however, in his innocence reported to his political superiors that the Kachhis were assembling to attack the Marris, and assured Brown, who fortunately was far too sensible to believe him, that he might expect aid at Kalat from his Kachhi allies. A little earlier he had been blind enough to order Loveday to send twenty of his sixty sepoys from Kalat to Mastung, half-way between Kalat and Quetta, and Loveday had been mad enough to obey him. The sight of this isolated handful of men was too much for the tribesmen. They rose and cut them to pieces, and then the entire province north and south of Kalat rose in revolt.

The Kachhis now threw off the mask and claimed the right to attack Quetta, which they did very feebly on the 23rd of June, and were easily repulsed. It should seem that Bean, though a large amount of treasure had been placed under his custody, had not thought it necessary to stow it in the citadel of Quetta, where a handful of sepoys could have beaten off any number of tribesmen; and, being thoroughly frightened, he shrieked for reinforcements, demanding a battalion of sepoys, four guns and three hundred horse from Kandahar. Meanwhile he drew in the detach- July.
ment of the Shah's troops which had been stationed at Kila Abdullah to keep open the Khojak pass, and having thus doubled the strength of his garrison, awaited events. The Kachhis, on their side, called to their aid the insurgents under Nasir Khan, and on the 9th of July again beleaguered Quetta. But after lying before the place for a week they fell asunder through internal dissension, and on the 17th retired to Mastung. Bean, though strong enough to pursue them and to reopen communication with Loveday at Kalat, omitted to do so; and the tribesmen were able to mature their designs for an attack upon Kalat.

Aware of the danger, Shah Nawaz Khan called in

1840. July-Aug. such tribes as were loyal to him, to the number of some seven hundred men, which, with Loveday's forty sepoys, and plenty of powder and lead, should have sufficed to repel the twelve hundred with which Nasir Khan finally besieged the place. But Loveday showed neither energy nor ability; and, although one assault was repelled, treachery within the walls constrained Shah Nawaz to open negotiations for the surrender of Kalat to Nasir Khan and for his own peaceful withdrawal together with Loveday and his party of sepoys. Loveday, however, seems to have taken complete leave of his senses. Chance had given him a loyal colleague during the siege in the person of the traveller Masson, but he had chosen to quarrel with him; and now, in the face of Masson's entreaties, he was not content with the engagement which Shah Nawaz had made for him, but must needs enter into parleys with Nasir Khan upon his own account. The wily chief gladly played with him for a short time and then seized him, shackled him, and carried him off as an object of derision on a triumphal march to Mastung. Thus Kalat was lost; a British officer was prisoner in the hands of a semi-barbarous chief; and there was confusion and dismay along the whole line of the Bolan pass. Nott alone kept his head, while all the political agents were crying out for a detachment here and a detachment there. He pointed out that from the Bolan to Ghazni there were only two regular regiments of sepoys and six guns, and he declined to break them up and allow them to be destroyed piecemeal by "a set of political boys."[1]

More trouble was at hand above the Bolan pass. The post at Kahan, useless and isolated, was in need of supplies, and on the 12th of August a convoy of twelve hundred camels and half as many bullocks started from Sukkur to re-victual it, escorted by five

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 17 of 1840, Masson to Bean and to Torrens, Sept. 25, 1840; Stocqueler's *Life of Sir William Nott*, i. pp. 189, 224-226; Durand, pp. 265-266.

hundred infantry and three howitzers under the command of Major Clibborn. The heat was appalling, but, the marches as far as Pulaji being accomplished at night, the troops suffered less than might have been expected. From that point the difficulties of the track through the mountains compelled all movements to be made by day, and the escort was strengthened by the addition of two hundred sabres. On the 31st of August the convoy reached the foot of the ascent to the Nafusk pass at 10 A.M., having taken eight hours to cover seven miles. So far it had been unmolested; but the heat of the morning had been overpowering, and both men and cattle were suffering from want of water. Misled by his guides, Clibborn determined to force the pass, which was occupied by tribesmen, and push on to water on the side of Kahan; and at 2 P.M. two companies and fifty dismounted troopers, covered by fire from the howitzers, advanced to the attack. The road had been destroyed, and breastworks and other obstacles had been thrown up by the enemy, but these were carried, not without loss; and the assailants reached the crest of the ridge triumphant, but disordered, breathless and spent by heat and thirst. The Baluchis seized the moment to counter-attack, and cut down the storming-party right and left. The supports fell back in panic upon the main body, and the Baluchis made a gallant attempt to overwhelm the whole force. But the main body stood firm, and their musketry, added to the steady fire of the guns, swept the tribesmen back with heavy loss to the crest of the pass. They retreated, however, no further, and Clibborn's men were so much exhausted that pursuit was out of the question.

1840. August. Aug. 31.

The distress of the troops from thirst was such that Clibborn was fain to send parties in search of water, which was found within a mile and a half of his position. But instead of marching to it with all his force, Clibborn sent only his water-carriers and the gun-teams, with an escort of irregular horse. Having with them no

1840. infantry, these were easily dispersed by the Baluchis,
Aug. 31. and thus all the water-vessels were lost. The news reached Clibborn at sunset, but still he hesitated to march to the water, and finally at 10 P.M. he decided to retreat, abandoning guns, stores and convoy; uncertain whether even so he might not have to fight his way through fresh bands of enemies. Having spiked his guns and taken a few camels to carry his wounded, he slunk away quietly at 11 P.M., and, passing over the scene of Clerk's disaster without opposition, reached water. There, however, the Baluchis overtook the rear, cutting up numbers of camp-followers; and only after a sharp engagement with the rear-guard
Sept. 1. were they beaten off. When morning broke Clibborn found that he was without provisions of any kind. He had ordered the sepoys to carry four days' flour, but they were too much fatigued to obey. He was therefore obliged to make a forced march of fifty miles to Pulaji, which was fatal to many of his men. His casualties in action alone numbered two hundred and seventy, so that his total loss must have amounted to over two hundred sepoys dead, besides the whole of his bullocks and over one thousand camels lost. Brown, thus left in hopeless isolation at Kahan, still showed so bold a front that on the 23rd of September the Marri chiefs offered to let him march away unmolested if he would give up the fort; and accordingly on the 28th Brown marched out. Though his sick numbered forty, and the men who could march were weak and faint from hunger, he brought away not only every man but also his gun, and after three days of exhausting march came safely on the 30th into Pulaji.

Such a mishap as Clibborn's following upon the previous misfortune of Clerk was alike serious and discreditable. The Marris altogether had actually destroyed at least five hundred sepoys and carried off over seventeen hundred camels and six hundred bullocks, and all because an ignorant civilian had chosen to place a garrison in a post where it was

absolutely useless. A court of inquiry condemned Clibborn and all the superior officers who had been responsible for sending him out; and it does not appear that Clibborn's handling of his command was altogether happy. But it is easy to condemn an officer after the event, not so easy to imagine his difficulties in passing an unwieldy convoy over sixty to seventy miles of appalling country, at the rate of one mile an hour, with a burning sun overhead, rocky hills baked into a furnace all round him, men and animals frantic from thirst, and a wary and bold enemy lying in wait to take advantage of every weakness and every false step. All present testified at least to Clibborn's unshakable courage and self-possession throughout. The man really responsible for these disasters was Ross-Bell, and the Supreme Government at Calcutta, arriving at this just conclusion six months after the event, passed upon him the gravest censure. But the worst offender of all was that same Supreme Government, with the Governor-general at its head, which had initiated and upheld the system of placing civilians in charge of military operations.[1] 1840. Sept.

Immediately after the first reverses in the Nafusk pass the political authorities had pressed urgently for reinforcements, and by the second week in August a wing of the Fortieth Foot was already on its way to the front from Karachi. Meanwhile, affairs along the whole line from Sukkur to Kandahar were in a most uncertain state; and, had there been less disunion among the tribes, the consequences might have been most serious. But Nasir Khan had no great resources at his back and, being weary of war, opened negotiations with Bean, through his prisoner Loveday, for a peaceful settlement. Bean replied by demanding that Kalat should be surrendered, and that Nasir Khan

[1] Stocqueler, *Life of Sir William Nott*, i.; Durand, pp. 266-272; *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 13 of 1840; Brown (political agent at Sukkur) to Outram, Sept. 5, 1840; vol. 1 of 1841, Captain Lewis Brown to Ross-Bell, Dec. 9, 1840; vol. 5 of 1841, Indian govt. to Ross-Bell, April 12, 1841.

1840. Sept.–Oct. should do homage to Shah Shuja and accept his sovereignty. This perfectly fatuous message from Bean was rejected with indignation, and naturally so, for its acceptance would have cost Nasir Khan his life at the hands of his chiefs; and the only result was to irritate the Brahuis beyond endurance. Loveday then urged that Masson should be sent to Bean to advise the offer of more moderate and less repellent terms; and Masson very generously undertook the mission. Upon his arrival at Quetta, however, he was placed under arrest by Bean and forcibly detained. The political agents, from Macnaghten downward, had been struck by the fact that Masson was suffered to go at large in Kalat, whereas Loveday had been seized and treated with ignominy; and the true explanation of the fact never occurred to them, namely, that Masson was a gentle creature, well known and respected, whereas Loveday had been overbearing, harsh and brutal. However, though Masson returned not, his companions carried back the news of his arrest, with the further information that the British had resolved to recover Kalat. Thereupon Nasir Khan determined upon war to the knife, left a slender garrison at Kalat, and entering the Bolan pass with the main body of his warriors prepared to join the Marris in assailing the British advanced posts in Kachhi.[1] On the 29th of October he attacked Dadhar but was beaten off by a headlong charge of one hundred and twenty sowars of Skinner's Horse, a fine feat of arms, in which the leader, Captain Macpherson, and all of his native officers were wounded. On the two following days Nasir Khan assaulted two other posts without success; and then learning that reinforcements—a wing of the Fortieth under Major Boscawen—were approaching Dadhar, he withdrew, not omitting first to cut Loveday's throat and

[1] Durand, pp. 272-274; *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 17 of 1840, Bean to Macnaghten (enclosing correspondence with Masson), Sept. 26; Masson to Torrens, Sept. 26; Macnaghten to Sec. of Govt., Oct 8; Nott to Ross-Bell, Nov. 3, 1840.

leave his body for his British countrymen to find in the deserted encampment. 1840. Sept.–Nov.

Meanwhile Nott, under the orders of Macnaghten, had moved up to Quetta on the 9th of September with a small escort, leaving two siege-guns to follow him, for he had orders from Macnaghten to take over reinforcements which were expected from Karachi, and with them to recover Kalat. These reinforcements were not forthcoming, and Nott was obliged to wait until a battalion of sepoys, which the political agent at Kandahar dared not at first spare from that garrison, was able to join him. Having obtained it, together with his two siege-guns, he, at Bean's urgent entreaty, marched first to Mastung where he found that Nasir Khan had moved, as above related, to Kachhi, and thence proceeded to Kalat, which he reached on the 3rd of November. He found the place undefended and abandoned; and learning that Loveday had treated the inhabitants very cruelly, he promised them protection. With this object he sent forward four companies to occupy the town, giving strict orders that no individual was to enter it without his permission. Thereupon a certain Lieutenant Hammersley, who had begun the campaign as Nott's aide-de-camp but had since joined the political service, at once tried to gain entrance and was very properly turned back. Galloping up to Nott, he addressed him rudely before all his staff with the words, "What right have you to order *me* not to enter the city?" Nott silenced him by threatening to put him under instant arrest; but Hammersley wrote and complained to Macnaghten; and Nott was actually called upon to defend himself because he, a general, had refused to endure insult and accept orders from a lieutenant. Such were the conditions under which military officers in high command were expected to conduct a campaign under the government of Auckland and Macnaghten.[1]

Having placed one of his own officers, whom he

[1] Stocqueler, *Life of Sir William Nott*, i. 268-269; ii. 357-360.

1840. Nov. could trust, in political charge of Kalat, with the Forty-second Native Infantry and fifty horse for garrison, Nott on the 7th set out for Quetta; and having left the Second Queen's and fifty horse at Mastung, marched for Kandahar. In the course of these fatiguing operations he had suffered hardly a casualty, and had lost not a single camel nor an ounce of baggage; and when he left Kalat the whole population lined the road uttering lamentations over the departure of the just man who had treated them humanely and shielded them from oppression. But he did not deceive himself as to the general aspect of affairs in Afghanistan. "All goes wrong here," he wrote on the 29th of September, "we are become hated by the people, and the English name and character, which two years ago stood so high and so fair, is become a by-word." [1]

In the course of November the long-expected reinforcements from Karachi gradually reached Sind, and a very capable officer, General Brooks, assumed command on the line of communications west of the Indus. The Marris and Kachhis had fallen off from Nasir Khan, who, with his own followers only, from two to three thousand strong, had taken up a position at Kotra, a little to south-west of Gandava, on the western flank of the British line of communications. At the end of November Brooks organised a force of about nine hundred men [2] and two guns under Colonel Marshall, with orders to fall upon Kotra by surprise. Ross-Bell, the political agent, could not refrain from supplementing Brooks's commands with voluminous instructions of his own, enjoining in particular that Marshall should take with him no guns. Fortunately, Marshall was strong enough to disobey this particular Dec. order, and at daybreak on the 1st of December he fell upon Nasir Khan's people, completely defeated them after a stout resistance, with a loss of four hundred killed

[1] Stocqueler, *Life of Sir William Nott*, i. 256, 269-270. *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 1 of 1841, Nott to Ross-Bell, Nov. 7, 1840.

[2] 25th Bombay N.I., detachments of 2nd and 21st Bombay N.I.

and over one hundred prisoners, and drove the Khan away in headlong flight, at no greater cost to himself than thirty-nine casualties, one-third of them killed. It was a timely little success which, as Marshall was careful to inform Ross-Bell, could never have been accomplished without artillery.[1] 1840.

Thus, after six months' hard work, Nott's line of communications between the line of the Indus and Kandahar was for the time secured. But it was not in this region only that there was trouble, for affairs had taken an equally unpleasant turn to north of Kabul. The Russian advance from Orenburg upon Khiva was, by the summer, known definitely to have broken down under difficulties of transport and supply and of sickness. This signified one anxiety the less; but Dr. Lord's feverish activities in the wrong direction were beginning to produce their inevitable results. In June that busy projector was still advocating the advance of a brigade to Bukhara; but at the beginning of August he found danger menacing his own posts which he had so recklessly established in isolation beyond Bamian. Captain Hay, who commanded the station at Rajga, finding armed men hovering about him and being himself sick, summoned a European brother officer to march to him with one company from Saighan, and sent out a British sergeant, Douglas by name, with two companies of Gurkhas of his own garrison to meet them and help them on their way. One of Lord's subordinate agents, however, forbade the march of the detachment from Saighan; and Douglas, not finding it at the appointed place, and supposing that it must have been delayed, bivouacked for the night, by permission of the native Usbeg chief, under the walls of a native fort at Kamard. The whole district, however, was about to rise against Lord's unprovoked aggression, and the chief summoned his own people and a neighbouring tribe to fall upon the two companies and make June–Aug.

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 1 of 1841, Ross-Bell to Colonel Marshall, Nov. 28; Colonel Marshall to Ross-Bell, Dec. 2, 1840; Durand, pp. 275-276.

1840. August. an end of them. At dawn, therefore, Douglas was surprised by a sudden attack, but keeping his men together he prepared to fight his way back to Rajga. For some miles he held his own with great skill and gallantry, notwithstanding heavy losses, and was fortunately rescued just as his ammunition was failing by two more companies which Hay, at the sound of the firing, had sent out from Rajga. It was no fault of the political agent that Douglas's two companies were not annihilated.

None the less, the Usbegs and their neighbours considered that they had been victorious; and now Dost Mohamed, who had escaped from Bukhara, was in the field, rallying, with the full support of the chief at Khulm, all malcontents to his standard. Lord promptly wrote the disquieting news to Macnaghten, and declared that there was no alternative but to send a brigade against Khulm at once. This was rather too much even for Macnaghten, who answered that so large a force could not be spared, and that the autumn was too far advanced to send troops across the Hindu Kush. Towards the end of August the Usbegs again threatened Rajga, and Lord was fain to evacuate the post and fall back first upon Saighan, which was held by some of Shah Shuja's newly raised native levies, and finally upon Bamian. In the retreat to this latter place Captain Hopkins's regiment of Afghan infantry distinguished itself by plunder of the baggage, and, upon arrival at Bamian, by the desertion of a complete company, with its arms and ammunition, to Dost Mohamed. These same men had behaved badly on their way up to Bamian, and had showed suspicious goodwill to one of Dost Mohamed's sons while quartered in that district; and General Roberts had carefully reported the circumstances to the envoy. Macnaghten at the time treated the affair as of no consequence, but now he was frightened, for there could be no question of Dost Mohamed's advance with a mass of the Usbeg tribes

at his back. He therefore sent Colonel Dennie with a battery of horse-artillery and the Thirty-fifth Native Infantry to take command at Bamian. 1840. Sept.

Dennie reached his destination on the 14th of September, where he promptly disarmed the rest of Hopkins's Afghans, and so banished one danger. On the 18th, having intelligence of parties of horse in the valley, he sallied out with five hundred infantry, three hundred cavalry and two guns, drove in the enemy's outposts and found himself face to face with Dost Mohamed's entire host of Usbeg horse and foot. Without hesitation he attacked. His two guns soon shook the irregular undisciplined mass, which would not await the onset of Dennie's Gurkhas and sepoys; and the whole fled away, offering an easy prey to the sabres of the cavalry. Dost Mohamed contrived to escape; but the chief of Khulm hastened to make his peace with Dr. Lord, and the fugitive Amir was fain to seek new refuge among the none too friendly tribes of Kohistan. Sept. 18.

Uncertain of Dost Mohamed's movements, but aware that his intrigues were at work in the capital itself, Macnaghten recalled Dennie with his battery and the Thirty-fifth Native Infantry to Kabul; and, since the chiefs of Kohistan had belied their simulated allegiance to Shah Shuja by banding themselves in secret to overthrow him, Macnaghten despatched Sale and Burnes with a small force [1] to punish them. They accordingly marched from Charikar on the 29th of September, destroyed a little fort or two, and then, receiving intelligence of Dost Mohamed at divers places, made unsuccessful attempts to overtake or surprise him. After a month of such work, with no result but the defection of Shah Shuja's Kohistani levies, Sale at last had definite information that Dost Mohamed was at Parwan a little to north-east of Charikar on the right bank of the Ghorband; and he

[1] Two companies each of H.M. 13th, 27th and 37th N.I.; two squadrons 2nd Light Cavalry; 5 guns.

1840. marched for that place on the 2nd of November. The
Nov. 2. advanced guard—seven companies of infantry, two squadrons of the Second Light Cavalry and two hundred Afghan horse, with two guns, under Colonel Salter—duly caught sight of the enemy near Parwan, evacuating the plain and taking to the hills. At Lord's suggestion Salter pushed forward his cavalry right and left to cut them off from the high ground; and so it was that the Second Light Cavalry found themselves confronted with a party of Afghan horse of inferior strength. And then followed one of those incidents which after endless explanations remain always mysterious. The commanding officer gave the word to charge, and he and all the Europeans with him galloped headlong into the Afghan horse. But their men hesitated, fell back, and finally took to disgraceful flight. Two of the five Europeans engaged were slain, Dr. Lord being one of them, and two others were desperately wounded. The advance of the infantry and guns drove the enemy from the hills and recovered the bodies of the fallen; but Dost Mohamed, who commanded the Afghan horse in person, and should either have been killed or taken, escaped without difficulty. The Second Light Cavalry was a good corps with good officers; but such misconduct could not be overlooked, and the regiment was with ignominy disbanded.[1]

This disgraceful reverse was a severe blow to Macnaghten. Even before the tidings reached him, he had been much shaken by the revolt of the Kohistanis in Dost Mohamed's favour and by his intrigues at Kabul. He wrote gloomily to Auckland of the possibility of having "to submit to the disgrace of being shut up in Kabul for a time," and went so far as to prepare the citadel against a siege and mount guns to command the city. On the 3rd of November, while riding in the evening round the outskirts of

[1] Durand, pp. 291-293. There is a long account of the affair in the *Life of George Broadfoot*.

Kabul, he received a letter from Burnes reporting the disaster, and urging immediate concentration of all troops at the capital. Before he could reach his quarters, a horseman rode up to him and announced that Dost Mohamed was at hand. The Amir then rode up, dismounted and tendered his sword to the envoy. Macnaghten courteously returned it, and the pair rode together into Kabul. What motives may have induced Dost Mohamed to surrender just at this juncture it is impossible to say. It has been said that the gallantry of the five British officers, who charged home into the Afghan horse while all of their own men galloped away, made him despair of triumph over such a foe. More probably he was weary of being hunted and of having to elude not only the pertinacity of his foreign enemies but the treachery of his own countrymen. In any case he had abandoned the struggle, and the only formidable rival to Shah Shuja was a prisoner in Macnaghten's hands. Such a stroke of good fortune, coming at a most critical moment, was almost overwhelming. It remains to be seen to what end it was turned by the confident and ambitious envoy.

1840. Nov. 3.

CHAPTER XXVI

1840. At this point it will be well to review briefly, by the light not of later events, but of contemporary documents, the general situation in Afghanistan at the end of 1840. Macnaghten's policy, it will be remembered, was to give Shah Shuja a free hand in the matter of administering justice, and of collecting and appropriating revenue, but to keep all foreign affairs and all control of the Shah's military forces strictly to himself. He had also sought to curb the turbulent Afghan nobles by raising native levies of every description; and lastly he had resorted to bribes in order to persuade the Khyberris on one side and the Ghilzais on the other to leave unmolested the British lines of communication.

Let us glance first at foreign affairs. Still dreading the advance of the Russians from Orenburg, Macnaghten had in May projected the despatch of two political officers to Khiva with orders to follow the Russian army, without protest or interference, to Bukhara. Authentic intelligence of the collapse of the Russian expedition had caused him to abandon this idea; but Major Todd, the political agent at Herat, had in December 1839, sent of his own motion a colleague, Captain Abbott, to Khiva, who had gone so far as to draw up a draft treaty of defensive and offensive alliance between England and Khiva, and to send it to Auckland for approval. This, as Macnaghten could not but confess, was rather an extreme measure, but he pleaded for a lenient view of Abbott's mistaken

zeal, which Auckland, while rejecting the treaty, was gentle enough to concede. For the rest, the withdrawal of the troops from Bamian was a first step towards allaying the irritation aroused at Kunduz and Khulm by the foolish aggression of Lord.[1] 1840.

The other foreign relations of Shah Shuja were confined mainly to Herat on the one side and to the Sikhs on the other; and it is hard to say which gave the more trouble to Macnaghten. At Herat that extremely dexterous scoundrel, Yar Mohamed, was perfectly clear as to two principal objects, that the British must not take possession of the place, but that they must none the less be induced to fill his pockets with gold. To this end he was on the one hand perpetually stirring up both his near neighbours, as in the district of Kandahar, and the remoter chiefs, as at Bukhara and Khiva, to steady hostility against the foreign invaders, and on the other, intriguing with Persia, so that the British might give him a subsidy to keep the Persians at a distance. First and last, he wheedled out of the British political agents some £200,000, and was still intent on obtaining more. Macnaghten became frantic with impatience, and in August he pressed for an advance upon Herat, which should end the difficulty once for all. Indeed, at the very moment when chaos was at its worst on the line of communication between Sukkur and Quetta, Macnaghten instructed Bean to keep negotiations moving as to Kalat, since any disturbance there would be a sufficient plea for an advance on Herat. Where the troops for such an advance were to be found, he did not say; but such details never troubled Macnaghten. The project came to nothing, for Auckland was firmly determined against it.[2] August.

The Sikhs were even more exasperating, for they

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 9 of 1840, Macnaghten to Indian government, April 24; Indian government to Macnaghten, May 25, 1840; Durand, pp. 242-243.

[2] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 14 of 1840, Macnaghten to Indian government, Aug. 10; vol. 13, Macnaghten to Bean, Aug. 12, 1840.

1840. May–Aug. were perpetually stirring up rebellion against Shah Shuja and in favour of Dost Mohamed. One such rebellion which took place at Bajaor, a valley some fifty miles north-west of Peshawar, in May 1840, drove a sad thorn into Macnaghten's side. The heat was too great for active operations, and, apart from this difficulty, there were no troops to spare. The political agent made a vain effort to compose matters by negotiation, but in vain. The Shah's levies, endeavouring to intervene by force, were discomfited and left a gun in the hands of the insurgents. It was very evident that only regular troops could deal with the situation; and the regular troops had their hands full already. Beginning in May with a mild complaint that the outstanding details unsettled between the Indian government and the Sikhs caused great inconvenience, Macnaghten, by August, was urging that the Sikhs should "by vigorous policy be deprived of the means of molesting us." Auckland, however, was not inclined to make war upon the Sikhs when so many troops were already fully occupied with hostilities in Afghanistan. Both he and Macnaghten should have remembered at first, instead of at last, that the whole power of the Sikhs lay between the British army beyond the Indus and its reserves in Hindustan.[1]

Practically, therefore, Macnaghten's foreign policy on Shah Shuja's behalf amounted to war with his neighbours both to east and west. His domestic policy was no more successful. In August, Burnes summarised the position with creditable sincerity and force. There could be no doubt as to Shah Shuja's unpopularity, which, considering the conduct of his allies, the

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 9 of 1840, Macnaghten to Indian government, May 11; vol. 11 of 1840, E. B. Conolly to Macnaghten, June 2, 1840; Durand, pp. 286, 289. Mr. Clerk, the very able resident at Lahore, doubted whether the Sikhs had actually aided Dost Mohamed with funds, and he even urged the employment of Sikh troops in the interest of Shah Shuja. Macnaghten took great offence at this. *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 17 of 1840, Macnaghten to Indian government, Oct. 14, 27, Nov. 19, 1840.

Sikhs and the British, was not surprising. His chief native adviser was imbecile, corrupt and oppressive. The collectors of the revenue were the Shah's soldiers. They received assignments on certain districts for their pay, and lived at free quarter until that assignment was paid. Necessarily this signified extortion and ill-usage towards the unfortunate inhabitants; but the British protected the Shah against the consequences. A system of revenue which was neither British nor Afghan could not fail to be vicious, and should be amended. At Kandahar the Duranis complained that they had suffered from the coming of the British, and the tone of the people generally was unfriendly. The Ghilzais were discontented. The Kohistanis, who were handed over to Shah Shuja as subjects, had been alienated by misrule and had become enemies. Lastly, all confidence in British protection had been shaken by the late events in Shawal and in Kalat, where Macnaghten had set up Shah Nawaz Khan and had allowed him to be driven out. Next, the condition of Shah Shuja's military forces was most unsatisfactory. The only really serviceable portion of it was that raised in India and paid by the British, the remainder being simply the Shah's plaything. Thus his household artillery had been left throughout the past winter without pay, and had consequently sold their arms and clothing and had mutinied. Ultimately they had been paid by Macnaghten's order from the British funds at Kabul, and had then returned to duty. But there had been another mutiny in a Hindustani regiment of infantry; and altogether the outlook was most unpromising. "We shall make nothing of Afghanistan," was Burnes's conclusion, "unless we change our ways."[1] 1840. Aug.

That Burnes, the visionary and optimist, should have written in such a strain was significant; but Macnaghten, when forwarding it to Auckland, made light of Burnes's opinion, and Auckland agreed to treat it as of little importance. Yet every word of it

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 14 of 1840, Burnes to Macnaghten, Aug. 7, 1840.

1840. Aug.–Dec. was true, and even fell short of the truth. The state of affairs about Kandahar, as shall presently be seen, had grown steadily worse since August. The system of collecting revenue was utterly vicious. The policy of raising native levies to check the Afghan nobles had resulted only in mutiny on the one side and bitter discontent on the other; while a succession of military reverses and mishaps testified eloquently to the fatal consequence of entrusting military operations to the supreme control of civilians. Among those civilians the very worst offender was Macnaghten himself. Nominally, General Roberts was in command of Shah Shuja's forces, or at any rate of such part of it as had marched into Afghanistan from India; but Macnaghten insisted on keeping every detail of control in his own hands. He would not allow Roberts to have anything to do with the local corps, denying him even the opportunity of seeing them, and would listen to no representations from him concerning their misbehaviour. He kept from him all knowledge of the movements of troops on the frontier; he intercepted from him the reports even of regiments which were unquestionably under Roberts's command; he would listen to no warnings of the danger of isolated posts, and heed no entreaties for sufficient protection of important stations; he promoted officers according to his arbitrary preference, ignoring alike the personal recommendations of Roberts and the established rule of military practice, thereby giving deep offence to all, and ruining the spirit of his officers as a body. He, like his august master, His Majesty Shah Shuja, looked upon his soldiers as playthings, some to be petted, others to be destroyed. He worked one battalion so unmercifully and subjected it to such hardship that he fairly wore it out and was obliged to disband it. He complained that he had not a moment to himself; and it is true that he gave himself no rest from the writing of interminable and unnecessary letters, but he always found time to do work which should have been left to

General Roberts. In vain Roberts remonstrated and protested. Macnaghten, who was more than a match for the general with the pen, answered him with petulance, or forwarded his letters with sneering comments. Finally, at the end of 1840, growing weary of Roberts's pertinacity, he ousted him from his command and set up a new general, Anquetil, in his place, little guessing that he was ensuring long life to Roberts and speedy death to his successor.[1] 1840. Aug.–Dec.

A yet more fateful military blunder had been made, chiefly through Macnaghten's weakness, in the course of the year at Kabul itself. Though fully alive to the importance of holding the Bala Hissar in some strength as a military post, and though at a critical moment ready to occupy it, he had yielded to the wishes of the Shah, who desired to keep the whole building for his family, which was now on the way to join him. In the course of this summer, therefore, the construction of cantonments was begun on the plain to north of the city, of which it is necessary to say no more at present than that they combined every possible defect of design and position. For this very serious blunder Cotton alone must be held responsible, though it is difficult to judge how far he was really a free agent in the matter. It does not appear that the ground occupied by the cantonments was purchased, and it is certain that a very large proportion of it was given over to the envoy and his immense retinue. It is possible, therefore, that this was the only site that Shah Shuja was prepared, or even able, to grant, that Macnaghten accepted it, and that Cotton took it over as a matter of course.[2] Cotton would have been the more willing to do so, first because, no matter how he might differ from Macnaghten on military questions, he considered himself bound by his instructions to obey him; secondly,

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 17 of 1840, Roberts to Macnaghten, Sept. 30; vol. 18 of 1840, same to same, Oct. 26, Nov. 8; Anquetil to Indian government, Dec. 2, 1840.

[2] See Hough, *Review of the Operations at Kabul*, pp. 104-106.

1840. Aug.–Dec. because he considered the stables in the Bala Hissar, which had been of necessity occupied by the native infantry during the first winter, quite unfit for that purpose; and thirdly, because he had caught from Macnaghten the infection of unwillingness to disoblige Shah Shuja. Though often differing in opinion from Macnaghten he had contrived to work with him without serious friction, though always by the simple expedient of yielding to Macnaghten's will. He had, in October, resigned his command and was about to return to India on account of ill-health, and he may, therefore, have been unwilling to raise difficulties just before his departure, the more so since, according to the envoy, the troops were as safe at Kabul as at Calcutta. Not that Cotton himself was so sanguine as Macnaghten concerning the future. He was under no illusions as to the instability of Shah Shuja's rule, and reported definitely and decidedly his own view that, if the British troops were withdrawn, the Shah would be unable to hold his crown. With this fact before us, his approval of the new cantonments is a fault that cannot be forgiven him; and it is only one more testimony to the demoralisation wrought among military officers by their enforced subservience to political masters.[1]

As regards the British troops, hard work was beginning to tell upon them severely. The Hundred and Second could not produce two hundred effective men on parade, and at least one of the Bengal native battalions—the Forty-eighth—was reduced to impotence by sickness. For this, once again, Macnaghten was in some degree responsible, because he insisted upon driving the soldiers into petty expeditions in the

[1] *I.O.*, Cotton's Letter Book, Cotton to Auckland, Oct. 25, Dec. 5; to Sir J. Nicolls, Nov. 2, 1840. I have searched in vain for any light upon the inception of these cantonments either in manuscript or in print; but I find in Cotton's Letter Book a letter to the Indian government of Feb. 1, 1841, in which he speaks of "the new cantonments," which proves that they must have come into existence in the summer of 1840.

field when the general required them to build huts for their shelter during the winter. There were so many important posts to be held that the force at disposal for active operations was insufficient, and therefore was inevitably overworked. In fact, there was hardly a battalion at Kabul that did not require immediate relief; and, though Colonel Shelton of the Forty-fourth had received orders in October to lead a brigade from Kurnal through the Khyber pass to reinforce Cotton, he could not hope to accomplish the long march in less than four months. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that the transport-department of the Bengal army was in a hopeless state. Experience had shown that camels from India were useless in Afghanistan. They would not face steep ascents, showing terror at the prospect, nor go up a hill to graze; and they had not learned, as had the Afghan camels, to avoid poisonous herbs. In fact, as General Elphinstone tersely put it, they were purchased, apparently, only to be buried; but the transport-officers, hide-bound by tradition, would not resort to the use of mules, native ponies and asses. As with the troops, therefore, so with the transport; all the work was thrown upon a few creatures which were thereby the more speedily worn out.[1] 1840. Aug.–Dec.

So much for the troops at Kabul and of the Bengal army generally. Let us now turn to those of the Bombay army, which by the end of 1840 had taken over the entire line of communication between Sukkur and Quetta. Here a principal difficulty was lack of a zealous and efficient staff. The spirit among the officers was, in fact, very bad. They jumped at staff-appointments in time of peace, when these signified ease and emolument, but could not be induced to accept them in the field, where they meant hard

[1] *I.O.*, Cotton's Letter Book, Cotton to Auckland and to Sir J. Nicolls, Oct. 12; to Auckland, Oct. 25, Dec. 15, 1840; *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 9 of 1841, Minutes of Court of Enquiry into the mortality of camels at Kabul, Sept. 9, 1841.

1840. Aug.–Dec. work. The result was that the Commissariat department, in spite of the experience of the past campaign, was in a very defective state. Extravagant contracts were made; and regiments were sent to the front without any record of the rate of hire agreed upon for their transport. And the Bombay government increased rather than allayed the difficulties of the unfortunate general in command. If he persuaded officers to undertake duties with the Commissariat, they threw up the task after a very brief trial. If he recommended the removal of one who had proved himself inefficient, the Bombay government left him for weeks without a reply. If he found a capable man to accept the post of baggage-master, the Bombay government refused to appoint him, and substituted an incapable man of their own. If, remembering the hordes of followers that had encumbered the advance of Cotton, he chose a strong man to limit strictly the number of his own followers, the Bombay government declined to confirm his choice. Whether all this were due to sheer neglect on the part of the authorities in Bombay, or to the spirit of jobbery which was quite as rife among Indian civilians as among their compeers in England, or whether intriguers were at work to harry General Brooks out of his command so that he might give place to some favourite of their own, is now of no great consequence. The result was in any case to increase friction, waste and extravagance, to paralyse the commander and to demoralise the troops. And this was a serious matter, for things were not secure between the Indus and Quetta. Despite of the surrender of Dost Mohamed, of the crushing defeat of Nasir Khan by Marshall, and the reoccupation of Kalat by Nott, both General Brooks and Ross-Bell agreed that the situation in Upper Sind was no easier, and that not a single soldier could with safety be withdrawn. The truth was that the dismembering of Kalat and the annexation of Shawal and Mastung to Shah Shuja's dominions, hastily accomplished by

Macnaghten against the opinion of Ross-Bell and— 1840.
though he could not venture to undo it—of Auckland Aug.–
himself, had been a great political blunder; and, Dec.
whether the Bombay government cared to face the fact or not, had stirred up permanent discontent in the district.[1]

And everywhere, at the risk of tedium it must be repeated, there was the same revolt of military officers against their domination by the political agents. Nott had spoken his mind freely about the " political boys." Ross-Bell had carried his arrogance so far as to have twice incurred censure from Calcutta for his interference with military matters, but he had done his best to wreck Marshall's enterprise against Nasir Khan, and was still harassing Brooks, and meant to harass him more. The evil must have been very great when Cotton, who had loyally given way himself to Macnaghten upon all points, spoke his mind at length to Auckland as the very last act of his command. " Some check must be imposed," he wrote, " or the whole system must be altered as regards young political officers assuming the authority they do when sent to accompany regular troops. Much disgust has arisen from this; and it is absurd that old experienced military men should be under the orders of lieutenants merely because they place after their names 'Acting-Assistant Political Agent.' " [2]

Meanwhile, ever since the autumn of 1840 there had been searchings of heart at Calcutta. Auckland, in October, had reviewed without flinching, though not without bitter disappointment, the reverses upon all sides; and early in November shrewd old Sir Jasper Nicolls took pen in hand and not only stated facts but drew conclusions. It was evident, he wrote in effect, that Shah Shuja, even with a force commanded

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 16 of 1840, Ross-Bell to Indian government, Sept. 24; Auckland's minute, Oct. 19; vol. 1 of 1841, General Brooks's Diary, Dec. 6-19, 1840.

[2] *I.O.*, Cotton's Letter Book. Cotton to Auckland, Feb. 1, 1841.

1840. Aug.–Dec. by European officers (who could ill be spared), would never be independent King of Afghanistan. After all that had been done, it was, perhaps, impossible consistently with good faith to withdraw him from Afghanistan, and equally impossible to displace him. It was therefore inevitable for the British to continue to rule in his name, bearing the cost of his establishments, personal, civil and political, without prospect of reimbursement. Already a large portion of the army was in Afghanistan, where native corps suffered from the climate and should be relieved after two years. The country could not be held with fewer than three European and ten native regiments, regular troops. Communication with it from India was always difficult and sometimes impossible. The Sikhs would not long permit the passage of our troops through their territory, and would choose their own time to force war upon us. The attitude of Nepal was also uncertain, if not menacing. We ought to be strong enough to fight Sikhs and Nepalis simultaneously, and therefore the army should be at once increased by the raising of additional regiments.[1]

Such a cold marshalling of unpleasant but undeniable truths was very distasteful to Auckland, who kept the document for two months, dismayed at the financial prospect which it opened up. But in January 1841 he laid it gently aside. The surrender of Dost Mohamed had, he said, changed the whole outlook, and there was now probability that troops might shortly be withdrawn from Afghanistan. He had no intention of sending a force to Balkh or Bukhara, nor even, if it could be avoided, to Herat. In the Punjab the British were more likely to be called in by one faction of Sikhs against another than to have to contend with them united. The strain was no doubt considerable, for the occupation of Aden and Karak had been added to the military burdens of India, and, moreover,

1841. Jan.

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 3 of 1841, Minute of Sir Jasper Nicolls, Nov. 10, 1840.

hostilities had recently broken out with China. Still, the increase of establishment during the past two years amounted to forty-five thousand native and six thousand European soldiers; and therefore there seemed no necessity for further augmentation of the army.[1] 1841. Jan.

It seems strange that Auckland should have misread the situation so completely as he did. In October, he had reviewed the whole series of reverses along the lines of communication with dismay; and Macnaghten's confession—for it amounted to little less—that only the conquest of Herat and war against the Sikhs could enable him to hold his own in Afghanistan, should have shown him that the situation was most dangerous and that he could not too soon withdraw his troops from the country. Since then, any immediate danger of a Russian advance had come to an end. Dost Mohamed had surrendered and was on his way to honourable captivity in Ludhiana. Kalat had been recovered, Nasir Khan had been heavily defeated and his levies dispersed, and Nott's communications with the Indus had been re-established. Now was the moment when, Shah Shuja's arch-enemy having been removed, the British troops might have marched out of Afghanistan with honour, and a mistaken policy might have been abandoned with a flourish of trumpets. 1840. Aug.–Dec.

It is true that at Kandahar there were dangerous symptoms of unrest. There, since July, a new political agent had replaced Leech, namely, Major Henry Rawlinson, whose fame rests upon the deciphering of the cuneiform inscriptions, and who was then known in some measure already as an Oriental scholar, but chiefly as a good soldier and a very shrewd and sensible administrator. While Nott was on his return march to Kandahar early in December 1840, Rawlinson was stirred by the deepest anxiety over a rising in the district of Zamindawar, some fifty miles to north-west of the city. The leader was one Akhtar

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 3 of 1841, Auckland's Minute of Jan. 15, 1841.

1840. Aug.–Dec. Khan, a bold ambitious man, whose expectations of obtaining charge of Zamindawar had been baffled by the minions of Shah Shuja. His followers were not at the moment numerous; but Rawlinson saw, quite correctly, in the movement not a mere tumultuary rising of oppressed peasants but an organised conspiracy against the Shah's government. During Nott's absence he had borrowed two guns from the garrison and sent them out with some native levies under a native leader against Akhtar Khan. He duly reported this to the general upon his return to Kandahar, who answered with the chilling comment, "Well, then, you have lost your two guns." Nott proved to be right. The native levies fled before Akhtar and left their artillery in his hands. Rawlinson was fain to press for the employment of regular native troops to crush the insurrection before it should become more formidable; and Nott, fully alive to the danger, made no difficulty about compliance.

Accordingly, on the 23rd of December, Captain Farrington sallied out with the Second Bengal Native Infantry, two horse-artillery guns, a squadron of regular native cavalry and a party of Afghan horse. The cold was intense and the march was most arduous; but the sepoys faced all hardships without a murmur, and Farrington, having crossed the Helmand at Girishk, turned northward, and on the 3rd of January 1841 came up with his enemy, defeated them with a loss of sixty killed, and recovered the lost guns. Disheartened by this check and oppressed by the severity of the weather, the insurgents dispersed; and Farrington returned to Kandahar.

But neither Rawlinson nor Nott flattered themselves that the trouble was over; and Rawlinson wrote very strongly to Macnaghten in condemnation of the whole system of revenue. He also affirmed boldly that the policy of paying blackmail to the Ghilzais might have done some good but had done more harm, since it only spread wider over the land the impression that

the British practice was to reward enemies and neglect friends. Fortunately the malcontents were divided into two hostile camps, for the Durani chiefs and the Ghilzais loathed each other with mortal hatred; but it was as plain to Rawlinson as to Nott that the rule of the British was abominated by both. Nott, in September 1840, had in a private letter set down his opinion in strong language. "The conduct of the one thousand and one politicals has ruined our cause, and bared the throat of every European in this country to the sword and knife of the revengeful Afghan and the bloody Belooch, and unless several regiments be quickly sent, not a man will be left to note the fall of his comrades. Nothing but force will ever make them submit to the hated Shah Shuja, who is most certainly as great a scoundrel as ever lived." These words naturally had not come to Macnaghten's eye; but Rawlinson had conveyed the same idea in softer language, not omitting his suspicions that Shah Shuja had countenanced the revolt of Akhtar Khan, and that His Majesty's hand could be traced making serious and dangerous mischief.[1] 1840. Aug.–Dec.

To all this Macnaghten replied that he would advise Shah Shuja to remove the minister who had abused the administration of the revenue, and to reform the system; but that, for the rest, he differed from Rawlinson upon every point. He communicated to the Shah the accusations brought by Rawlinson, and the monarch was, or pretended to be, well nigh frantic in affirming his innocence. Macnaghten accepted his assurances without question, and informed Rawlinson that in this case "the King could do no wrong." Auckland, of course taking Macnaghten's view, pronounced that Rawlinson's misgivings as to the general discontent and disloyalty about Kandahar was exaggerated; and so matters went on as before. The obnoxious minister was indeed removed, and orders were given for juster

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 4 of 1841, Rawlinson to Macnaghten, Jan. 17, 20, 1841; *Life of Sir William Nott*, i. 256; Durand, pp. 303-304.

1840. collection of the revenue; but this was a matter which
Aug.– could only have been taken in hand when all disorder
Dec. had ceased. In the midst of disturbance and rebellion there was no leisure for serious administrative change. Moreover, the Shah was always impecunious. He was expecting his harem—a trifling establishment of some eight hundred souls—at Kabul, which would add to his expenses. Unless Macnaghten were prepared to advance more funds from the Indian revenue —and the Indian government already stood aghast at the enormous cost of its Afghan venture—money must be wrung out of the Afghans by some means. And it was so wrung by the old condemned expedients.[1]

It was perhaps natural that Macnaghten should
1841. discredit all reports of serious trouble about Kandahar,
Jan. for by the end of January he was once more intent upon the capture of Herat. Reports had come in that Persia was again contemplating an advance upon that place; the explanation of which was that Yar Mohamed, with a view to extracting further subsidies from the British resident, Major Todd, had suggested to the Persians the expediency of such a movement, well knowing that there was no probability of their undertaking it. To his great disgust, however, the resident not only declined to pay him additional money, but on the 1st of February cut off his regular monthly allowance pending reference to Calcutta. Thereupon, Yar Mohamed, recovering himself, suggested that, if two lakhs of rupees were immediately made over to him, he would assent to the admission of a British force into Herat. Todd, who had long been working for this very object, jumped at the offer, but was cautious enough to require first that Yar Mohamed should send his son, as a pledge of his good faith, to conduct the British troops into Herat. Yar Mohamed, who had no intention at heart of admitting troops willingly at

[1] Durand, pp. 305-306; *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 4 of 1841, Macnaghten to Rawlinson (letters), Jan. 30, 1841; Indian government to Macnaghten, Mar. 15, 1841.

all, thereupon drew back, declined to furnish the guarantee, and demanded either immediate payment of the money or the withdrawal of the mission from the city. He reckoned that the disturbances about Kandahar would keep the British troops fully employed and make Todd averse from a rupture with Herat; but, to his consternation, Todd took him at his word, removed the mission, and with it banished all immediate prospect of the two lakhs of rupees.[1] 1841. Feb.–Mar.

The ultimate consequence of this very comical incident was the recall of Todd in disgrace and disavowal of his measures by Auckland, who wrote conciliatory letters to Yar Mohamed, and, as may be supposed, found no difficulty in restoring friendly relations. But the immediate result was, for a short time during February and March, feverish activity in preparing a march upon Herat. Captain Saunders of the Engineers, being consulted as to the force and artillery that would be required, named twelve thousand men, twelve heavy guns and as many mortars; whereupon Macnaghten, on the 25th of March, wrote urgently to Outram at Hyderabad bidding him hasten guns and ammunition to Sukkur, while Rawlinson addressed Ross-Bell at Quetta, pleading for immediate advance of Bombay troops through the passes to Kandahar. But Ross-Bell had his own opinions upon this subject, and wrote them very plainly to the chief authorities both at Calcutta and at Bombay. He represented that the situation between the Indus and Quetta was still very uncertain, and in the Kandahar provinces decidedly bad. If the expedition to Herat were to take place, therefore, reinforcements of at least five battalions, one-third of them European, and a European battery must be sent forward to Quetta at once. Macnaghten, he added, was hurrying his preparations so as to reach Herat early in July, in time to save the harvest. But this was out of the question. Neither sufficient infantry, nor sufficient artillery, nor

[1] Durand, pp. 317-322.

1841. Feb.–March. sufficient transport and supplies could be ready before October without dangerous weakening of the force in the Kandahar provinces; and even in that case there would be no siege-train. And to advance upon Herat without ample means to ensure success would be to court serious danger. Ross-Bell's apprehensions were very soon laid to rest, for, by the end of March, the whole project was abandoned, and Herat need for the present concern us no longer. But the incident reveals the confusion which reigned among the British authorities in Afghanistan. Here were Rawlinson pressing for the advance of troops from Quetta and Macnaghten ordering the collection of a siege-train at Sukkur, both hot for the capture and occupation of Herat, while Ross-Bell, in his commanding position at Quetta, objected strongly to either measure, and would do nothing to further them without reference to Calcutta. Not only did the political authorities claim sole direction of the military operations, but each several political agent aspired to be an independent commander-in-chief within his own sphere. It is obvious that in such a condition of affairs the man who ruled on the lines of communication could neutralise all the efforts of his superiors at the front by undertaking little enterprises of his own, and then declaring that he could spare no troops.[1]

It was at this juncture, in the spring of 1841, that the government in Downing Street suddenly intervened in the Afghan war, being alarmed by all the numerous reverses of the summer and autumn of 1840, and as yet uninformed of the more favourable events of the close of the year. The Ministry attributed the various mishaps to the recall of too many troops at the end of 1839, and the resistance to Shah Shuja's government

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 4 of 1841, Macnaghten to Ross-Bell, Jan. 28; vol. 6 of 1841, Rawlinson to Captain Saunders, Feb. 24; to Ross-Bell, Mar. 15; Macnaghten to Outram and to Dep. Comm. General Parsons, Mar. 15; Ross-Bell to Indian government and Bombay government, Mar. 29; vol. 7 of 1841, Ross-Bell to Rawlinson, April 11, 1841; Durand, p. 319; Kaye, i. 580-581.

to want of energy in reforming the civil administration. They represented the financial embarrassment that had arisen from the cost of the Afghan venture, and foresaw no decrease of it, since it was evident that, without the support of a considerable British force for a considerable time, the rule of Shah Shuja could not be maintained. They therefore concluded that the time was come to decide definitely whether Afghanistan should be evacuated forthwith, or whether the British should take the government into its own hands and uphold its position there at all costs. The Indian government must choose between these two alternatives, and, if it should choose the latter, must act with energy.[1] 1841.

This letter appears to have reached Auckland in the second week in March, and, being a conscientious man, he reviewed the situation with sincerity. "The result by which I *am* discouraged," he wrote, "is that even for the support of the Shah's ordinary authority no reliance whatever can apparently be yet placed on his own establishments. Whether it be to quell an insurrection in the Durani districts or to repress the predatory habits of the Khyberris, the sole dependence of the authorities in Afghanistan seems to be on the British troops." One of his council, Mr. Prinsep, took an even stronger line. It was, he wrote in effect, monstrous that Shah Shuja, a mere cypher in the first essentials of sovereignty, should be upheld by Macnaghten in irresponsible appropriation of every rupee of revenue, and suffered to make grants, aggressions and usurpations without any reference to the general welfare. If the British broke down the independence of the tribes by military force and brought a country into subjection, it was nothing less than their bounden duty to see that the revenue was properly collected and spent, and that justice was equitably administered. Practically, these few sentences, ab-

[1] I have been unable to find the original letter of the Secret Committee, but an abstract is given in Durand, pp. 324-325.

1841. Feb.–March. solutely true in every respect, amounted to condemnation by both Auckland and Prinsep of Macnaghten's policy from beginning to end, and should have taken logical effect either in his immediate recall or in the evacuation of Afghanistan.[1]

The moment was not unfavourable, if any moment could be called favourable, for such evacuation. All was, for the moment, quiet. On the side of Kabul, Shelton's brigade had reached Jalalabad and had made its presence felt, as shall presently be told, by a punitive march against one of the predatory tribes in a valley adjoining the Khyber pass. On the side of Kandahar a timely display of force by Nott had overawed a fresh gathering of the tribes under Akhtar Khan, and that chief himself had received a dress of honour in token of his reconciliation to the rule of Shah Shuja and of the full pardon granted to him on his return to his allegiance.[2] Thus, there had been sufficient success to vindicate the honour of the British arms, and a sufficient manifestation of their power to show that they were irresistible. It was of course arguable that, if the British troops were withdrawn, Shah Shuja might very soon find his throat cut; but he certainly felt the indignity of the tutelage under which he reigned, and, by Rawlinson and Nott at any rate, he was suspected of endeavouring to shake it off by treachery. It would not, therefore, have been unreasonable to tell him that now he could stand without support, and that the British were content to leave him to himself with their best wishes.

But Auckland, whether from false shame, or unwillingness to wound Macnaghten, could not bring himself to acknowledge that his policy was mistaken. He was honest enough to admit all the difficulties, embarrassments and dangers that beset the position in Afghanistan, but none the less he persisted that

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 4 of 1841, Auckland's minute of Mar. 19; Prinsep's of Mar. 21, 1841.

[2] Stocqueler, *Life of Sir William Nott*, i. 286-291; *Kaye*, i. 589.

without any change of system all would yet be well. He had even some warrant of military opinion in support of his view, for Cotton, upon Shelton's arrival, had informed Sir Jasper Nicolls that there was now no reason why the Thirteenth, three native battalions and two batteries of artillery should not return to India.[1] It is true that for purely military reasons—namely, for preserving the efficiency of these corps—it was urgently necessary that they should be withdrawn from Afghanistan as soon as possible. It is true also that Cotton was wholly dependent upon Macnaghten for his intelligence as to the feeling in the country, and that he shrank from any controversy with him even upon strictly military questions. He cannot have been wholly ignorant of Nott's apprehensions, but Nott had at his elbow Henry Rawlinson, who saw with him eye to eye, whereas Macnaghten derided the views of both. And it must be added that Cotton was no time-server to gain credit by belittling his own officers and adulating those of Macnaghten, for he held Nott's opinion in high respect, and had supported him loyally in the bitterest of his quarrels with the politicals. Cotton was, in fact, simply deceived by Macnaghten, or, if he was not, thought it better to keep his ideas to himself. And Macnaghten, face to face with unpleasant and unanswerable criticism, had taken refuge in bold assertion which was almost bluster. He could not now deny Shah Shuja's unpopularity, but he was vehement as to his personal merits and as to the actual if not apparent success of his rule. "All things considered," he wrote, "the present tranquillity of this country is to my mind perfectly miraculous. Already our presence has been infinitely beneficial in allaying animosities and pointing out abuses. . . . We are gradually placing matters on a firm and satisfactory basis."[2] When such was the language of the man on the spot, Auckland gladly set

1841. Feb.–March.

[1] *I.O.*, Cotton's Letter Book, to Sir Jasper Nicolls, Feb. 1, 1841.
[2] Durand, pp. 307-308.

1841. aside the warnings of Nott and of Rawlinson. He was indeed so much alarmed by the financial outlook that he demanded an early report upon the revenues of Afghanistan; but he shut his ears to the mutterings of the coming storm, and decided to continue his progress along the road that led to destruction.

CHAPTER XXVII

On the 1st of February, Cotton definitely relinquished the command in Afghanistan, having by that day reached the river Ravi on his homeward journey. His last weeks in the country, spent with Macnaghten and Shah Shuja at Jalalabad, were not the pleasantest of his sojourn. Shelton's brigade, after a march of nearly three months, was approaching Peshawar towards Christmas 1840, and all the political agents were wild to make immediate use of it against the rebel chief, still unsubdued, of Bajaor. Mackeson in fact begged that the brigade might be halted for a season at Jamrud to give weight to his negotiations with the aforesaid rebel; and Cotton was justly apprehensive as to the result. Dost Mohamed, proceeding under strong escort to India, was expected to reach Peshawar at about the same time; and such a concentration of troops, as Cotton wrote, was far more likely to give umbrage to the Sikhs than to frighten a barbarian in the mountains a hundred miles away. Trembling for his communications, Cotton protested so strongly that Macnaghten for the moment gave way. Cotton, moreover, was anxious not only to avoid friction with the Sikhs but to give Shelton's brigade time to construct huts for themselves at Jalalabad before the wet season should set in. But neither communications nor dwellings for the soldiers were matters that appealed to Macnaghten. He had in fact banished all consideration for the shelter, health and comfort of the men in the previous year when he ordered 1841.

1841. Feb. troops away on the abortive march to Pashat. He insisted that Shelton should halt at Jamrud, and Cotton was fain to yield. "I think the measure in every way objectionable," wrote Cotton, "but my instructions oblige me to comply." His last letter to Nicolls adjured him to permit no expedition to Bajaor without proper reconnaissance. The political agents, he said, were bent upon it; but nothing was known of the country except that the roads were infamous, that one fort at least was so strong as to call for siege-artillery, and that supplies were not to be found in it. With this final warning and the protest, already quoted, against the subordination of generals to political lieutenants, Cotton leaves the stage of this history.[1]

His successor, General Elphinstone, was at this time not far advanced on his journey from Meerut; and when Shelton at last reached Jalalabad in January, there was no commander-in-chief to give even nominal trouble to Macnaghten, while there were three new battalions and a new battery for him to play with. Shelton, colonel of the Forty-fourth, was a veteran who had joined the Ninth Foot in 1805, seen his first service with Moore in the advance to Sahagun and retreat to Coruña, had then served at Walcheren, returned to the Peninsula in 1812, and, fighting there till shipped off to Canada in 1814, had since gone through the awful campaign in Arakan. His personal courage and fortitude were, even in those days, exceptional. He had lost his right arm at the storm of St. Sebastian; and it was said that he had stood up outside his tent, unmoved, while the surgeons took the limb out of its socket. He had not only great experience but had keenly studied his profession, and was by no means lacking in brains. In fact, he had many of the qualities which go to make up a fine soldier, but undid them all by a morose and uncertain temper. As a regimental commander he was what is called a martinet, which may be defined as one who insists upon obedience but cannot evoke it

[1] *I.O.*, Cotton's Letter Book, to Sir Jasper Nicolls, Feb. 1, 1841.

willingly, and lacks sense of proportion in the enforcement of discipline. As a man he was difficult, contradictious and disposed to nurse grievances, yet not without latent generosity and power of appreciation. His defects being very real and very conspicuous, he was generally, and with good reason, disliked, and even hated. This type of officer is by no means extinct, though less common than it was in high place, experience having taught Adjutants-general that his shortcomings outweigh his merits. In Shelton's case, as in many others, it can never be known how far incessant physical pain, due to the rough surgery of those days, may have embittered his character.[1] 1841.

Such was the man who marched into Jalalabad in January 1841, and found himself, after years of work with Moore and Wellington, under the orders of a Macnaghten. The envoy soon supplied work for him. A tribe called the Sanga Khels had lately given much trouble by making raids upon convoys in the Khyber pass, and required to be brought to reason. The entrance to their valley, called the Nazian valley, was some four miles from the post of Pesh Bolak, which itself lies about fifteen miles east of Jalalabad; and there ran from its head a narrow pass, debouching on the Khyber at Landi Khana, eight miles to the south-east of Dakka, through which they carried off their plunder. They were a formidable folk who had repelled many great warriors, including Nadir Shah, and so far had held their valley intact against all invaders. On the 21st of February Shelton marched Feb. from Jalalabad with a sufficient force to ensure success, and took the business scientifically in hand. The valley was twenty-five miles long, and was one series of formidable defiles, the breadth in many places not exceeding that of the stream which wound through it,

[1] William Napier's intellect was completely unbalanced by the pain of an old wound. Lord Anglesey, though he never uttered a sound, would lock himself into his room, and roll on the floor in agony. Sir Hugh Palliser's quarrel with Keppel admits of this explanation likewise.

1841. Feb. and the cliffs being frequently so high and perpendicular as to shut out the sun for more than twenty hours out of the twenty-four. Shelton, recalling his studies of Alpine campaigns, made it his principle always to get above his enemy, no matter by what exertion, dislodged them thus with ease, and took most of their petty forts, or *sangars*, in reverse. Two strongholds only needed March. to have their gates blown in; and by the 13th of March he had penetrated to the very last dwelling at the foot of the snowy range, subdued the Sanga Khels completely and destroyed one hundred and forty-four of their petty strongholds, all at a cost of nine killed and twenty-nine wounded. Such methods contrasted very favourably with those of stupid, blundering old Sale, who, near Charikar, had thrown away as many casualties, two-thirds of them in his own regiment, in a single unsuccessful and quite unnecessary assault upon some trifling fort. For this service Shelton, who had not a ribbon to wear on his coat, received from the Shah the ridiculous order of the Durani Empire, but from the Indian government no word of acknowledgement, which, to such a mind as his, of course constituted a grievance.[1]

April. The next incident was the arrival at Kabul at the end of April of the new commander-in-chief, Major-general Elphinstone. He had begun life in the Guards, but had seen no active service until he went with Graham to the Low Countries in command of the Thirty-third, in which campaign, as also in that of Waterloo, he had done extremely well. He was in fact a good soldier who knew his profession thoroughly, though a stranger to Eastern warfare; but he was so infirm, so much crippled by gout, and in such miserable health that he was quite unfit for any kind of work. He suffered intense and constant pain, and was, to all

[1] I gather the foregoing details, as well as the situation of the Nazian valley, from a very brief scribbled memorandum in Shelton's hand, which was most kindly sent to me, with others of Shelton's papers, by Captain C. B. Norman. As to Sale in Charikar, see *I.O.*, Cotton's Letter Book, to Auckland, Oct. 6, 1840.

intent, a dying man. Knowing his weakness, he had not desired the command, and indeed had only accepted it after much and repeated pressure from Auckland, because he thought it wrong in a soldier not to go where he was ordered. Cotton, who had known him for five and thirty years, but had not lately seen him, warmly approved the appointment, evidently from esteem of the man; but the plain truth is that Elphinstone was chosen in order that Nott might be excluded, for it was expected that Elphinstone would obey Macnaghten, while it was quite certain that the other would not. 1841. April.

Elphinstone had hardly arrived before he found himself at variance with Macnaghten. The huge cumbrous convoy of Shah Shuja's zenana had marched across the Punjab under the escort of George Broadfoot in safety as far as the Indus, when it was threatened by a mob of mutinous Sikh soldiery who declared that they would stop it and plunder it. The political agent on the spot at once cried out for troops, and Macnaghten demanded the immediate despatch of Shelton's brigade by forced marches to Peshawar. To this Elphinstone strongly demurred. The brigade should long since have been at Kabul; but the political agents had been playing with it ever since it had come within their reach, first halting it at Jamrud, then detaining it at Jalalabad, then sending it to the Nazian valley, and never allowing it to settle down. Now they wished to hurry it through the Khyber pass to Peshawar, where it would arrive to meet the full heat of June and almost certainly small-pox as well, and thence back to Kabul, a march of at least two hundred miles—all on account of a pack of women. However, as usual, the envoy prevailed. The brigade marched to the Sikh frontier; the mutinous Sikh soldiers decided to leave Broadfoot's convoy alone; and on the 10th of June Shelton at last led his men into Kabul, with their health fortunately unimpaired. After them the six hundred females and their attendants likewise trailed into the capital, and June.

1841. June. within six weeks Shah Shuja was applying to the bankers of Kabul for loans to enable him to support them. The general may be pardoned for his profound dissatisfaction with the whole proceeding.[1]

Elphinstone was not better pleased by other things which he saw about him. The cantonment had been set down in the plain about a mile to the north of the city, and was of simple oblong outline, one thousand yards long and six hundred broad, protected by a low rampart and a narrow ditch with circular bastions at the four angles. At the northern end it was prolonged for about three hundred yards by a further enclosure containing the quarters of the envoy and of his very numerous staff and attendants. Everywhere it was hemmed in by fenced plots and gardens; and it was commanded upon three sides by a number of little forts, many within musket-shot, and on the fourth or west side by a low eminence, known as the Behmaru Hills, within long range of cannon. Not an inch of ground outside the cantonment was under the control of the military commander, and there was no place whatever for exercising the troops. But Cotton had hired one little fort about five hundred yards south of the north-west angle and had there, with culpable carelessness, lodged his supplies, though the access to it was flanked along the whole length of the road by a walled garden and an unoccupied fort. The whole arrangement was as foolish and as vicious as it could be, and Elphinstone seems to have recognised the fact at once. There was really but one place where the victuals and the reserve of stores should have been lodged, and that was the Bala Hissar, where a sufficient guard at least should have been established for their protection. The engineer, Lieutenant Sturt, seems to have plotted

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 9 of 1841, Elphinstone to Auckland, May 30; Macnaghten to Indian government, June 19; vol. 16 of 1841, Macnaghten to Indian government, Aug. 4, 1841; Broadfoot's *Life of Major George Broadfoot*, pp. 14-22.

quietly and silently for some such arrangement, for in the very days when Shah Shuja's six hundred women were entering the city, he reported that he had nearly completed barracks within the Bala Hissar sufficient to house the European garrison and its native attendants.[1] The moment might not have been the happiest for reopening a question which had already been settled, with fatal weakness and perversity, by Macnaghten; but a strong man in Elphinstone's place would have accepted no denial, and thereby would have simplified his whole task immensely. 1841. June.

It must, however, be admitted that the general was in a most difficult position. He had to take over a bad state of affairs as he found it, with the further disadvantage that there was a poor prospect of obtaining any money to amend it. The cost of the Afghan war was causing to the Indian revenue an annual deficit of a million and a half sterling; and the Supreme Government, naturally alarmed, was pressing upon Macnaghten the need for the strictest economy. If Elphinstone had insisted upon moving the cantonment to another site, the question of the Bala Hissar must inevitably have been raised anew; and in any case the new ground must have been bought, the cost of the old cantonment must have been thrown away, and it was doubtful whether the work could have been completed before winter. Even in the existing cantonment there were not barracks enough to hold the troops, and the building of them was being urgently hurried forward. In a new cantonment, self-contained and self-dependent, as it ought to have been, very substantial structures would have been required for the housing of supplies and stores, to say nothing of barracks and defensive works. Moreover, there were already far too few officers of engineers in Afghanistan for all the tasks that were set to them in Quetta, Kandahar and Ghazni. It is more than doubtful whether such

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 7 of 1841, Report of Lieutenant Sturt, Jan. 13, 1841.

1841. June. a new cantonment could have been completed before the winter, even with lavish profusion of money. The Shah would certainly have viewed the project with disfavour; and the Oriental is a past master in the arts of obstruction and delay.

In the circumstances Elphinstone took a middle course. It had been laid down as a principle in the occupation of Afghanistan that there should be both at Kandahar and at Kabul a brigade at disposal for work in the field at any moment. At Kandahar Auckland himself had ordered the construction of a fortified magazine, or citadel, which could be held by a small force so that the rest of the troops might be set free. Laying hold of this fact, Elphinstone reported that a like citadel to overawe the city of Kabul would be very desirable; and meanwhile, as a step towards that end, he urged Macnaghten to buy ground enough, close outside the south side of the cantonment, for the erection of a small fort which would hold all his ordnance and be defensible by two companies. Thereby several points would be gained. The garrison would be liberated for the field; the entrenchment would be strengthened by a flanking work on the side of the city; and the access to the fort—the Commissariat fort as it was called—where the supplies were lodged, would be to some extent guarded and covered. Elphinstone even hoped that it would answer, in some degree, the purpose of a citadel. Macnaghten, to his credit, at once assented; the work was begun forthwith, and the circumstance was duly reported to Auckland. The sequel may as well be told at once. After some delay the Supreme Government wrote, in June, that it would not sanction the expenditure of so large a sum as £2400 upon such an object, and the work upon the fortified magazine was abandoned.[1]

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 8 of 1841, Elphinstone to Macnaghten, May 9; Macnaghten to Elphinstone, May 10; Indian government to Macnaghten, June 28; vol. 9 of 1841, Elphinstone to Auckland, May 30, 1841.

What further recommendations, if any, the unfortunate Elphinstone may have made, it is impossible to discover; but there can be no doubt as to their almost inevitable fate, if they involved the spending of money. One thing only is certain, that he felt and did not conceal from his superiors a sense of military insecurity; and this should not be forgotten. Meanwhile, it must be noted that, when Shelton's brigade arrived, it was placed in camp on the Sia Sang hills, some two miles to eastward of the cantonments, and separated from them by a canal and by the Kabul river. Both of these obstacles were bridged in two places, on the roads which led to the Bala Hissar and on that which led to the hills; but it does not appear that Elphinstone took any measures for the protection, by even the smallest permanent work, of any of these bridges; and this omission seems hardly in accord with sound military principle. It is, however, impossible to find out what he may or may not have suggested to Macnaghten. Any application for money was not likely to be favourably received; and any hint of necessary precaution would have been scouted on the ground that Kabul was as safe as Calcutta. Upon that postulate was built the whole of Macnaghten's policy, and he could hardly be expected to admit, even by implication, that it was false. 1841 June.

For the rest Elphinstone complained bitterly of his transport-service which, in his view, required radical reform. Indeed, the mortality among the camels grew steadily all through the summer until it amounted, during the five months from April to August, to over twelve hundred out of the forty-five hundred at Kabul and Jalalabad.[1] Moreover, there was dearth of officers in other departments besides the engineers. The medical staff was so deficient that, when Shelton marched to Peshawar, the only assistant surgeon who could be furnished to accompany

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 11 of 1841, Report of Court of Enquiry into mortality of camels, Sept. 9, 1841.

1841. June. him was the medical store-keeper; and, until his return, the medical stores had to look after themselves. Again an officer of experience was required to take charge of the ordnance, but the only one furnished was a young subaltern of artillery, named Vincent Eyre, who, though an absolute novice, was duly nominated commissary. Altogether Cotton had not left things in a satisfactory condition at Kabul.

Matters were little better at Kandahar and on the lines of communication through Sind. In the very April. first days of April, General Brooks had arrived at Quetta with a small field-force of about seventeen hundred men from the Bombay army;[1] and the protection of Shawal and Kalat was supposed to be wholly under the charge of Bombay troops. When, however, Brooks was directed to send the one Bengal regiment with him—the Forty-second Native Infantry—to escort treasure from Quetta to Kandahar, he answered that he was unable to spare it. The truth was that Ross-Bell had once again initiated military operations upon his own account. A petty Brahui chief, named Fazil Khan, had attacked another petty chief who was, or was supposed to be, friendly to the British; and Ross-Bell must needs step in to protect his ally. The scene of action was Nushki, some seventy-five miles, as the crow flies, south-west of Quetta; and for thirty-four miles the road was one continuous defile, more formidable than any part of the Bolan pass. Brooks, conceiving that he had no power to object, sent off the detachment of troops required by Ross-Bell without a word, though inwardly furious at the whole proceeding. Soon afterwards, however, he discovered that his instructions from the Supreme Government authorised him at any rate to give an opinion upon projected military operations, and that these instructions had been for months in the hands

[1] 4th troop of Horse Artillery, 1 troop of Skinner's Horse, detachment of Pioneers, H.M. 10th Foot and 21st Bombay N.I. The two battalions had each a strength of about 750 rank and file.

of Ross-Bell, who had omitted to forward them. Then, 1841. May.
not unnaturally, Brooks wrote to Ross-Bell pointing out the absolute futility of sending troops to Nushki at all. In the first place, it was doubtful whether the British ought to take any share whatever in the internal feuds of the wild tribes; in the second place, it was certain that Fazil Khan's people would disperse as soon as the British troops arrived, and reassemble as soon as they went away; and, in the third place, if the British troops were maintained at Nushki they must be fed, which signified the constant despatch of convoys under strong escorts. "Thus," he concluded, "we are incurring immense expense in loss of camels by transporting supplies, and risking the health of the men in order to give protection to sixty or seventy tents." And in actual fact, Ross-Bell advanced this expedition to Nushki as a reason for declining to send reinforcements from Quetta to Kandahar, since he could spare none of his already weak, overworked camels to carry victuals through the Bolan pass.[1]

Here, therefore, was another instance of the extreme danger of making every petty political agent an independent commander-in-chief; and Brooks, having once discovered that he had the right to give his opinions upon military matters, proceeded to deliver them very forcibly, not only to Ross-Bell but to the Supreme Government. What garrison, he asked, did the government intend to keep at Quetta for the winter, for the troops must positively be protected from the weather? To this the Governor-general answered, after much correspondence and six weeks' delay, that he could not say at present but would inform the Bombay government as soon as he had made up his mind. Probably anticipating some such reply, Brooks meanwhile addressed the military authorities in Bombay and pointed out, first, that it was useless to keep

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 8 of 1841, Ross-Bell to Rawlinson, May 2; Brooks to Ross-Bell, May 11, 15; to Indian government, May 20, 22, 1841.

1841. May. troops at Quetta in the winter since cold and snow forbade military operations altogether; and, secondly, that he could obtain no workmen to build barracks, as all were already taken up to construct a fortified magazine at Kandahar. The Bombay government meanwhile had already found it necessary to remove Brooks from his command for other reasons, and so was delivered from the need of answering his troublesome questions. But, whatever the merits or demerits of this particular officer, it is evident from his correspondence that the Commander-in-chief in Afghanistan could not count upon the slightest control over the troops, nominally under his orders, between Sukkur and Kandahar.[1]

April. About Kandahar the temporary suppression of the Durani rising had been immediately followed by unrest among the Ghilzais in the valley of the Tarnak, to curb which it had been resolved to restore the fortifications of Kalat-i-Ghilzai and to establish there a strong post. The inception of this work increased the excitement among the tribes; and in the middle of April Rawlinson, with Nott's concurrence, obtained Macnaghten's leave to send a strong detachment to Kalat-i-Ghilzai to guard the working-parties. On the 30th of April, Major Lynch, the political agent, having, as he said, information of a concerted plan of the Ghilzai tribes to besiege Kalat-i-Ghilzai, rode with an escort of two hundred troopers near the petty fort of one of the chiefs. The Ghilzais, as he passed, rode out brandishing their swords; and thereupon Lynch summoned more men and stormed the fort out of hand. Macnaghten and Rawlinson admonished Lynch to be careful in future, and deplored the incident; but the mischief was done. The Ghilzais in that quarter began to assemble, and presently surrounded

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 7 of 1841, Bombay government to Supreme Government, May 7; vol. 9 of 1841, Brooks to Q.M.G., May 11; vol. 10 of 1841, Brooks to Q.M.G., Bombay, undated (May or June) 1841.

the works at Kalat-i-Ghilzai as if to isolate the post completely.[1] 1841. May.

Macnaghten, upon learning of this, suggested to Elphinstone a movement of British troops in co-operation with Shah Shuja's towards the threatened point, writing a typical letter which practically forced the general into compliance. But Nott, having occasion to send stores to Kalat-i-Ghilzai, took care to provide an escort of four hundred bayonets, a detachment of horse and two guns, under a good officer, Colonel Wymer, which should be strong enough to deal with any trouble. As Wymer drew near to the post, the Ghilzais broke up from before it and marched to meet him, followed for a short distance by Captain Macan, who was in command of the garrison. Macan, however, remembering the censure of Lynch for venturing to take the offensive, thought himself debarred from attacking them, and on the evening of the 29th of May the Ghilzais fell upon Wymer in May 29. force. Though heavily punished by the guns, they assailed him with good courage, manœuvred to take him in flank and, when Wymer made a change of disposition to meet these tactics, charged boldly to the bayonets. For five hours they persisted, being reinforced till their numbers were swelled from two to four thousand in the course of the combat; until at last, disheartened by heavy losses, they drew off and left Wymer to pursue his march. His casualties did not greatly exceed thirty, of which two only were killed; but if his sepoys had been less steady, or some misfortune, such as is common in war, had befallen him, Macan's unwillingness to attack would have been the determining cause of any mishap. Macnaghten's system of paying blackmail one day and fighting on the next was bound to throw everything into confusion.[2]

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 7 of 1841, Rawlinson to Macnaghten, April 16; Lynch to Rawlinson, May 1, 8; Rawlinson to Macnaghten, May 4; Macnaghten to Rawlinson, May 8, 9, 1841; Durand, p. 309.

[2] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 9 of 1841, Nott to Elphinstone (enclosing Wymer's report), June 1, 1841; Durand, pp. 309-310.

1841. June. The check to the Ghilzais was not decisive. On the day after the action Rawlinson reported that Akhtar Khan had taken the field again in force, with the avowed intention of capturing the fort at Girishk; and a few days later he added the intelligence that the lesser Durani chiefs had joined the Ghilzais, in spite of their inveterate hatred of each other. This, commented Rawlinson, showed the intensity of dislike and jealousy with which the British were regarded by the Duranis. Macnaghten was deeply hurt, especially resenting the phrase "intensity of dislike," which, as he contended, there was no evidence to prove and much to refute. However, the insurrection spread steadily; and Macnaghten felt himself bound to detach from Kabul a regiment of cavalry, a battalion of infantry and four of the Shah's guns, which, together with another battalion from Kandahar, were to take post at Mukur, on the upper waters of the Tarnak, to overawe the Ghilzais. As to Akhtar Khan, the envoy's irritation found vent in the offer of a large reward for that leader's head, and in the threat that he should be hung as high as Haman when caught. But Macnaghten still declined to admit that the situation was the least serious; and, when frankly informed by Rawlinson that things were growing worse every day, he rebuked his subordinate with considerable temper. "These idle statements," he wrote, "may cause much mischief, and, often repeated as they are, they neutralise my protestations. I know them to be utterly false as regards Kabul, and I have no reason to believe them true as regards the country about Kandahar." There is something almost pathetic in this outburst of childish petulance over facts that refused to be done away with by protestations.[1]

Something, however, had to be done about Akhtar Khan; and the task of dealing with him fell, of course,

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 9 of 1841, Rawlinson to Macnaghten, May 30, June 3; Macnaghten to Rawlinson, June 7; vol. 10 of 1841, Rawlinson to Macnaghten, June 17, 28, 1841; Durand, pp. 310-311.

upon Nott. Auckland had long urged the employment of the Shah's troops only for the quelling of internal insurrections, and with the greater insistence since Sir Jasper Nicolls lost no opportunity of pointing out that, unless propped by British bayonets, Shah Shuja's throne must certainly fall. Elphinstone, when the point was pressed upon him, answered that the Afghans drew no distinction between the Shah's troops and the British—doubtless because both were commanded by British officers—and that the defeat of the one had as bad a moral effect as of the other. However, Macnaghten, being bound in policy to show that British troops could be dispensed with, had furnished Rawlinson with a body of a thousand Durani horse, and had recently added to these two more Afghan regiments known as Jan Baz horse, under Captain Hart. These Rawlinson now purposed to send to the relief of Girishk; but, having some doubts as to their efficiency, he begged Nott to send also a battalion of the Shah's infantry, under Captain Woodburn, and a couple of horse-artillery guns. Against his will, and against his better judgement, for this detachment reduced his own garrison at Kandahar to a battalion and a half and four guns, Nott complied. Rawlinson represented that Akhtar Khan had only fifteen or sixteen hundred men; and it was certainly an important object, if it could be accomplished, to suppress that insurgent leader for ever. 1841 June.

Accordingly, at the end of June, Woodburn marched westward from Kandahar for the Helmand. The first incident was that the Durani horse failed to put in an appearance at all; but Woodburn, pursuing his way without them, on the 3rd of July reached the river opposite Girishk, and found the fords there in possession of the enemy, with the current running so rapidly as to be impracticable for infantry. He therefore sent Hart three miles up the stream where there was a ford which could be crossed by cavalry, and himself essayed to pass the water lower down. He failed, however; and Hart, who had succeeded in crossing, turned back,

1841. July 3. little pressed by the enemy, and forded the river again to rejoin him. Woodburn moved up the left bank to meet him; and at 8 A.M., his sepoys being much exhausted by heat and fatigue, he halted and pitched his camp. At 4.30 P.M. he observed that the enemy was in motion, and sent Hart with his cavalry to oppose his passage of the river. But the Jan Baz were not anxious for a fight, and Akhtar Khan succeeded in crossing before Hart could prevent him; whereupon Hart was fain to fall back upon Woodburn, who formed his line of battle in the old-fashioned way with infantry and guns in the centre and cavalry upon either flank. The enemy, who were six thousand strong, promptly assailed him, but being repulsed in two attacks upon the centre, swept round Woodburn's right flank, put to flight the Jan Baz which were there stationed, and fell upon his rear. The rear rank of the infantry on the left, with creditable steadiness, faced about and checked the assailants by their fire; but the panic and confusion of the horsemen had necessarily thrown those on the right into disorder, and for a time the situation was very critical, until Woodburn, moving a gun from his front, cleared the enemy away from his rear with a few rounds of grape. Akhtar Khan then drew off, but Hart could induce few of his Jan Baz to follow in pursuit, and Woodburn's men were too weary to give them support. Woodburn, therefore, took up a defensive position in an enclosure, against which Akhtar Khan, returning, delivered several half-hearted attacks without success, till at last, at 11 P.M., he recrossed the river and retreated. Woodburn then occupied the fort at Girishk, but felt himself too weak to advance further, unless Nott should send him reinforcements.

Nott, for his part, while full of praise for Woodburn, was perfectly furious when he heard the details of the action. Rawlinson had stated the enemy's numbers as only one-fourth of their real strength; and, of the Shah's levies, the Durani horse were strongly suspected

to have fought on Akhtar Khan's side after nightfall, and the Jan Baz had not only run away, but plundered the baggage of Woodburn's infantry, being, as Woodburn reported, better fit for that work than for any other. Marshalling all these facts in telling sequence, Nott wrote to head-quarters at Kabul that he would listen to no further requisitions from Rawlinson for troops, unless he were strong enough to detach a force that could hold its own without assistance from Duranis and Jan Baz. The former, he advised, should be disbanded forthwith; the latter he accused both of cowardice and of treachery. It is pitifully ludicrous to add that the Supreme Government at Calcutta, upon reading this letter, expressed its resentment against the unnecessarily harsh terms in which Nott had criticised the Jan Baz.[1] 1841. July.

Weak though his garrison was, Nott had such confidence in Woodburn that he sent a strong force of infantry, a party of cavalry and two guns, under Captain Griffin, to Girishk; and at about the same time he despatched also another force under Captain Chambers against the Ghilzais. Chambers came upon the Ghilzais on the 5th, but they made no stand, and fled before the cavalry, or ever the infantry and guns could come up. Griffin was more fortunate, for Akhtar awaited him on strong ground, sheltered by walls and gardens, confident in his superiority of numbers. Attacking without hesitation, on the 17th of August, Griffin, with three hundred and fifty bayonets, drove the insurgents from their position and forced them into the open, where Hart's Jan Baz partly redeemed their character by charging home and dispersing the enemy with great loss. The action was sharp, costing Woodburn rather over one hundred casualties, but it was decisive. Both Duranis and Ghilzais were disheartened by the sequence of defeats; and Macnaghten, who had Aug. 17.

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 11 of 1841, Nott to A. A. G., Kabul, July 7; Indian government to Elphinstone, Aug. 11, 1841; Stocqueler, *Life of Sir William Nott*, i. 318-323; Durand, pp. 311-313.

1841. Aug. reported the suppression of the Durani rebellion to Calcutta a full fortnight before it was accomplished, was exultant, for it seemed that his work was done. He was now under recall upon promotion to the government of Bombay, and counted upon quitting Afghanistan with honour to fill a great position which might, in its turn, lead to something greater still.

Ever since July he had been busy arranging with Elphinstone, or rather dictating to Elphinstone, his plans for the withdrawal of the Thirteenth and five native regiments to India on the 1st of November; and Elphinstone, cheerfully accepting the dictation, had rejoiced that there was nothing to prevent the return of these corps, since "it would have the worst possible effect on them and on those that were left behind, if they were detained later than that date." Macnaghten, however, was urgent that the government should send a strong brigade to Kabul by way of Peshawar, and two more battalions of sepoys by Shikarpur to Kandahar, which did not suggest great confidence in the situation; and, as Elphinstone mildly remarked, the participation of Herat in the Durani rebellion certainly called for the reinforcement of Kandahar, while the behaviour of the Khyberris also required a demonstration in some strength. But Macnaghten hoped to quiet Herat altogether by offering Yar Mohamed three lakhs of rupees annually to abstain from further trouble; and, though there was unrest among the Urakzais and the Afridis to south of the eastern end of the Khyber pass, yet they were far more likely, if properly handled, to fight each other than combine

Sept. against the British. By the middle of September Macnaghten had convinced himself that all was going as well as possible. The subjugation of the Duranis was complete; the Ghilzai insurrection had been totally suppressed; the country between Kandahar and Kabul was perfectly tranquil, and the fort at Kalat-i-Ghilzai, which was now nearly completed, would control any tendency to turbulence. Between Kabul and

Jalalabad all was equally quiet. Far to north, Bukhara, Khulm and Kunduz were inclined to court British friendship. Only in the Charikar district was Shah Shuja's authority still defied; but the people there could easily be subjugated if necessary. Altogether there was no occasion for large reinforcements, except for their moral effect, the present strength of the troops being ample for the maintenance of the British position. Such was the envoy's glowing report in the autumn of 1841, and Elphinstone was bound to accept it. So Macnaghten made his preparations to return to India; Elphinstone, who was resigning his command owing to ill-health, and indeed had the home-sickness of the dying strong upon him, prepared to start with him; Sale's brigade rejoiced in the prospect of a speedy retirement from the bleak mountains into the plains; and Burnes, who was to succeed Macnaghten as envoy, hugged himself over the great chance that was to assure for him a famous career. There were high hopes and joyful expectations in those September days at Kabul.[1] 1841. Sept.

And yet there were warnings which only a wilfully blind man could have ignored. Rawlinson, in these very days, reported that to west of Kandahar the districts of Nish, Tirin and Derawat still, as ever, abjured allegiance to Shah Shuja, and had joined in the recent rebellion of Akhtar Khan, and that they must be reduced to obedience before any British troops could be withdrawn from Kandahar to India. In Zurmat, to east of Ghazni, a troublesome robber-chief had proved himself too strong to be dealt with by irregular levies, and needed regular troops and guns for the capture of his fort. From Charikar Henry Pottinger sent news of an aggressive movement so menacing as to demand the instant march of reinforcements.

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 11 of 1841, Macnaghten to Elphinstone and Elphinstone to Macnaghten, July 22; vol. 12 of 1841, Macnaghten to Indian government, July 31; vol. 15 of 1841, Macnaghten to Indian government, Sept. 15, 1841.

1841. Finally, in the Khyber pass the eastern Ghilzais were assembling with hostile intent. In response to Auckland's urgent orders for economy, Macnaghten had summoned the Ghilzai chiefs and informed them that their subsidy would be reduced by £3000 a year; and the chiefs, accepting the situation without protest and indeed with cheerfulness, had gone to their own place and quietly taken measures to indemnify themselves in their own way.[1]

Oct. On the 2nd of October it was known that the passes to Jalalabad were blocked up; and Shah Shuja sent emissaries to conciliate the eastern Ghilzai chiefs, without success. On the 4th a British officer, Captain Gray, who was returning to India with a small escort, was hotly opposed, and was obliged to take unfrequented paths to reach some native levies which were under orders to protect him. The loyal chief, who guided him, warned him plainly that all Afghanistan, even Kabul itself, was ready to break out, the whole country having made common cause to expel the British. Gray reported this incident on the 7th to Burnes; but, none the less, the leading detachment of Sale's brigade, namely, the Thirty-fifth Native Infantry under Major Monteith, was ordered to march for Jalalabad on the 9th, as though the road had been as safe as from London to Portsmouth.

An officer, George Broadfoot, who commanded a body of sappers of Shah Shuja's army with great efficiency, has left us an account of his proceedings on these days, which will show how military matters were carried on under Macnaghten at Kabul. Broadfoot received orders on the 7th to proceed on field-service with one hundred sappers, and to take his orders from Major Monteith. Since another detachment of his corps had been sent, with all the tools at disposal, to

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 15 of 1841, Rawlinson to Macnaghten, Sept. 11; H. Pottinger to Macnaghten, Sept. 18; Macnaghten to Elphinstone, Sept. 22; vol. 16 of 1841, Macnaghten to Indian government, Oct. 26, 1841.

accompany a small expedition to Zurmat, he set the armourers and smiths in Kabul to make tools. They refused to take orders from the British ; whereupon Broadfoot sent down a party of men to give each smith his work and keep him at it until it was done. Thus, by next day, the 8th, the tools were ready, and Broadfoot went to Major Monteith for orders. The major said that he could give none because he had received none, except that he was to move towards Jalalabad; and he declined to apply to Macnaghten for instructions, knowing by experience that it was not the envoy's custom to consult, much less to instruct military officers. It was the custom of the political agents, said Monteith, to send troops on "wild-goose chases," take the credit for any successes, and let the military officers bear the blame for failures; and he knew better than to ask Macnaghten for any information. 1841. Oct.

Proceeding next to the Commissary of Ordnance, Broadfoot found that he, too, had received no orders. He therefore sought out Elphinstone, who was in bed, but insisted on rising at once, though he could not walk into another room without assistance and was for a time quite exhausted by the effort. Courteous and cheerful, in spite of pain and infirmity, the general said that he knew nothing of the service on which Monteith was starting, having received no instructions from Macnaghten, except to send the major off with a given number of men. He had received no information as to the forts, if any, that might be encountered; he could not say if any engineer was accompanying the expedition; he had not even been apprised whether Monteith's mission was one of hostility or of precaution, and he could only leave it to Broadfoot to decide what tools and stores he should take with him. In fact he could give no orders, and, like Monteith, shrank through bitter experience not less than through a sense of indignity, from asking any questions of Macnaghten.

With great difficulty Broadfoot extorted from

1841. Oct. Elphinstone a private note to Macnaghten, begging him to give that officer a hearing, and to let him know definitely whether there were to be hostilities or not, and if so where, against what enemy, and in what probable strength. In particular he desired to be informed whether forts were to be taken and destroyed. With this note Broadfoot approached Macnaghten, who received him ungraciously. The envoy averred that, being no prophet, he could not tell whether there would be hostilities or not, but that he would find out about the forts and would sanction whatever the general proposed; and with a private note to that effect, he sent Broadfoot back to Elphinstone no wiser than he had come. Deeply hurt, the general complained bitterly of this insulting treatment; but, fully alive to the injustice of allowing a junior officer to be held responsible for a possible failure in the field simply because the political agents declined to inform him of the nature of the service, he consented at last that Broadfoot should again apply to Macnaghten.

The envoy this time was peevish, and, with very questionable taste, declared that the general was fidgetty; but Broadfoot stuck to his point that he could make no preparations unless he knew what he was expected to do. Then at length, with much irritation, Macnaghten produced his intelligencers, so that Broadfoot might examine them himself upon the question of the forts. They could give no information of the slightest value; but, when Broadfoot pointed this out, Macnaghten interrupted him impatiently. He said that Monteith should start on the morrow for Butkhak, nine miles east of Kabul on the northern road to the Khyber pass, as a demonstration; that there would be no fighting; that the rebels would certainly submit before evening; and that then Monteith should proceed to Jalalabad. Broadfoot asked whether, if the rebels did not submit, Monteith should return; to which Macnaghten replied that Monteith should remain at Butkhak until the expedition lately sent to Zurmat,

which had absorbed all the public transport at Kabul, should return. Broadfoot rejoined that in this case so small a force as Monteith's, encamping near all the outlets from the hills, would invite attack, the more so as his halting there would be ascribed to fear. Thereupon Macnaghten lost his temper and said that he had given his orders; and that, as to Broadfoot and his sappers, twenty men with pick-axes would suffice, since they were wanted only to pick stones from under the gun-wheels for a peaceable march to Jalalabad. Broadfoot at once caught him up. "Are those your orders?" he asked. "No," answered Macnaghten, recovering himself, "it is only my opinion, given at the general's request and yours. The general is responsible and must decide as to the number of sappers and tools that must go." 1841. Oct.

With this Broadfoot returned to Elphinstone; and presently there arrived a note from Macnaghten, ordering the immediate march of Monteith, and containing almost the identical words that he had spoken to Broadfoot about the sappers and the enemy, but throwing all responsibility on the general. The unhappy Elphinstone, still strongly and rightly objecting to the movement, appealed to his chief staff-officer, one Captain Grant, upon whom the general, in his weak state, leaned wholly, and who responded to this confidence by bullying his chief. Grant abused the envoy, spoke insolently to Broadfoot, advised Elphinstone to have nothing to say to Macnaghten, or as to any part of the question, and, declining to discuss the matter further, retired with a newspaper to the window. Weak and shattered, Elphinstone still made one more effort, and sent Broadfoot back to Macnaghten to urge anew his reasons for objecting to Monteith's march. The envoy refused to hear the reasons, saying that he had given his opinion and that the general was responsible; and, forgetting himself completely, he told Broadfoot that, if he thought Monteith's movement likely to bring on an attack, he

1841. Oct. need not go—he was not wanted, or, if he were, there were other officers. Therewith Broadfoot respectfully declined to hear more and took his leave. Macnaghten presently had the grace to follow him and to shake his hand, but made no other apology for an inexcusable insult.

These incidents, which, as a rule, would not deserve to be recounted at length, are here set down as the best means of illustrating Macnaghten's methods, and showing the utter demoralisation which they had wrought among the officers. It does not appear that Macnaghten's manners were always as offensive as upon this occasion. Indeed, he was habitually courteous; but he had a bad temper, which occasionally got the better of him, and then he revealed the fact that at bottom he was ill-bred. But it is the principle and not the manner with which we are here concerned, namely, that the political agents claimed the right to dictate military movements to military officers, taking the credit if all went well, and disclaiming responsibility for any military mishap. It may with reason be urged that no self-respecting general should have consented to serve upon such conditions. But too much must not be expected from poor human nature. Roberts had fought against the system and had been sent back to India. Nott had fought against it, and, though he had not been recalled, had been subjected to humiliating censure and insult, and had for months expected his recall daily. The road to advancement lay in submission to the political agents; and only those who were content, whether through weakness or through time-service, to walk it, could hope for high command in Afghanistan. There is no reason to believe that either Cotton or Elphinstone were time-servers. They were selected because they were judged likely to be subservient, Cotton being weak and stupid, and Elphinstone, though by no means incapable, naturally of charming manners and ready tact. Both, however, resented their position bitterly, and both,

after less than a year of command, took refuge in sick leave. 1841. Oct.

Meanwhile, the result of the system upon all ranks had been disastrous. The political agents made a point of concealing from the military officers the nature of any expedition upon which they sent them, partly because they wished to avoid awkward questions, but chiefly because they could themselves give no information and were quite content to dispense with it. The military chiefs, to guard themselves against any disaster, therefore made a point of sending a force which should be, so far as they could judge, of overwhelming strength —possibly greater than was necessary—and which invariably included British regular troops. Thus Macnaghten, when applying to Elphinstone for the numbers that he could furnish for an expedition to Zurmat, gave the following particulars only: An officer of Shah Shuja's levies had by Macnaghten's desire attempted to take the stronghold of a robber chieftain, and had failed; it was necessary to make an example of this chieftain; the numbers of his followers were unknown, but were probably not formidable; and the area of his country was perhaps two hundred square miles. Upon information so vague it was impossible to judge whether five hundred or five thousand men might be necessary; but Elphinstone named about a thousand British regular troops, with ten pieces of artillery, and a thousand irregulars.[1] The use of British troops for such service was of course deplored by Auckland; but, since the general was to have no say as to the policy of undertaking the operation at all, and yet was to bear the responsibility of any miscarriage, he naturally did his best to make himself safe against mischance.

The movement of these bodies of men naturally required transport for their supplies and stores, and possibly even of their forage, for this last was a matter

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 15 of 1841, Macnaghten to Elphinstone and Elphinstone's reply, Sept. 22, 1841.

1841. Oct. seldom considered by the political agents. But there was also considerable work for the transport in bringing in supplies from time to time to feed the various garrisons; and the consequence was that the unfortunate animals were worked to death. Every expedition signified inevitably a certain number of casualties among them, and some expeditions a great many; and so their numbers steadily dwindled. It mattered not upon what service the transport might be employed at the moment. If Macnaghten wanted to send off an expedition, back the camels must come, perhaps two or three days' journey, to fulfil his august commands. As to formation of magazines along the routes most generally traversed, Macnaghten would not hear of such a thing. Every winter he and Shah Shuja went, with an escort of one or two thousand men, from Kabul to pass the winter at Jalalabad; and it would have been a reasonable precaution, as well as a great convenience, to establish magazines at Jalalabad itself and at Gandamak, on the way to it. But Macnaghten scouted the bare idea of such a thing, as implying that Afghanistan was a hostile country. Thus, in deciding as to the strength of an expedition, the military chiefs were confronted with a second great difficulty, namely, whether they were justified, for some object which they had no means of appraising aright, in hiring transport at enormous expense. In the instance immediately before us, Broadfoot was aware that all the public transport-animals in Kabul had been sent to Zurmat; and one principal reason why he pressed Macnaghten to give information concerning the purpose of Monteith's march, was to ascertain whether he would be warranted in hiring transport to carry the tools of his sappers. But the political agents, though they poured out money like water in bribes and blackmail, would not condescend to such paltry details as this.

Thus the transport suffered terribly and unceasingly; and the men suffered not less. They had to

march scores and even hundreds of miles into remote valleys, enduring hardship, privation and fatigue, only to find, very often, when they reached their destination, that the enemy, whom they were intended to frighten or chastise, had quietly decamped upon their approach, that there was nothing left to them but to march back again, and that all their labour had been for naught. The political agents were of course quite satisfied—they had made a "demonstration"—but the troops were thoroughly disgusted. It is well known that nothing is so ruinous to soldiers as to be worked, worried and harassed to no purpose;[1] yet it was thus that Macnaghten and his underlings had treated those under his orders, ever since the departure of Keane. Of course, they had varied the process by occasionally leaving isolated posts in remote districts, far from any support; but this, at best, signified more work for transport and for escorts, and at worst disaster and annihilation. 1841. Oct.

The general consequence was, in every quarter outside the influence of Nott, a decline in the spirit and the discipline of the troops. They felt no confidence in their leaders. Elphinstone was so sick that he was no more than a cypher. Sale had mismanaged every operation that had been entrusted to him, and, though full of personal bravery, was utterly wanting in moral courage. Shelton, who had but just arrived, was generally hated. The senior officers next to them were bitterly hostile to the political agents, and resigned themselves, rather than have any communication with them, to dumb unintelligent, unquestioning and grudging obedience to their orders. They had a shrewder knowledge of the situation than was supposed. The political agents were by no means united among themselves, and did not conceal their opinions of each other.

[1] The British soldier's phrase describes the process more tersely and forcibly than any other, but unfortunately it cannot be written down in full. The one thing that he cannot stand is being "——d about."

1841. Oct. Burnes, in particular, who was not on the best of terms with Macnaghten, had, as we have seen already, condemned the envoy's system, root and branch, and was anxious to show how much better he could manage things himself. To his credit, he assumed no Olympian majesty in his intercourse with his fellows, but was modest, affable, and therefore popular. And Burnes was a chatterer, flighty and unstable, but with occasional flashes of deep insight that were not lost upon his hearers. No officer of any professional knowledge could fail to note the extreme danger of the military situation, the weakness of the army scattered wide over an enormous area, and the utter insecurity of the communications. When men, who were in a position to know, added that there was general discontent with Macnaghten's rule in Afghanistan, the peril was naturally magnified in their minds. If matters came to the worst, where was the leader who could save the army?

And so there grew and waxed among all ranks a spirit of discouragement and even of despondency. Croaking was the rule, and one of the worst of the croakers was Grant, Elphinstone's chief staff-officer, an overbearing man who took up the attitude that it was useless to attempt anything, and, upon that ground, silenced all remonstrance and every suggestion. And so from head-quarters the poison spread downward through channels that were only too well prepared to receive it; until from the Commander-in-chief to the drummer there was but one desire, to get out of Afghanistan at any cost. There were officers with the troops—Henry Havelock of the Thirteenth and George Broadfoot, to name but two out of many—who, if they could have taken Elphinstone's place, would have revived confidence within twenty-four hours and discipline within three days; but they were mere majors and captains. "The gentleman employed to command the army," to use Wellington's contemptuous phrase of Macnaghten, desired at the moment

only a cypher as a military colleague. All was well. 1841.
He had said it, and so it must be. But all was not well;
and though it may be easy to turn a general into a
cypher, it is not easy at a moment's notice to reconvert
a cypher into a general.[1]

[1] Broadfoot's *Life of Major George Broadfoot*, pp. 23-29.

CHAPTER XXVIII

1841. Oct. PURSUANT to Macnaghten's order, Monteith marched on the 9th to Butkhak with the Thirty-fifth Native Infantry, a squadron of the Fifth Cavalry, two guns and one hundred of Broadfoot's sappers. The camping-ground chosen for him was extremely ill-situated; but, having Macnaghten's assurance of a peaceable march to Jalalabad, he thought it not worth while to change it, though he took every precaution against surprise. At night he was suddenly attacked, and for a short time there was some confusion; but Monteith's dispositions were good, and he succeeded in beating off the enemy with some loss, though not before they had carried off a few camels and other plunder. Upon hearing this, Macnaghten, on the 10th, ordered Sale suddenly to move out to Butkhak with the Thirteenth and two to three hundred irregulars, and to clear the
Oct. 12. passes. On the 12th, accordingly, Sale attacked and forced the Khurd Kabul pass—the more southerly of the two entrances to the defile—with little difficulty and no more than fifty casualties. He himself was wounded in the action, so it is not easy to say whether the next proceeding was due to Sale, who still accompanied the force in a litter, or to Dennie, who was next in command. In any case, Monteith with the Thirty-fifth were left to encamp alone in the Khurd Kabul valley, while the rest of the force returned to Butkhak.

There is no need to dwell upon the viciousness of such a disposition; and, to make matters worse, there was attached to Monteith, on the usual terms, a political

agent named Captain Macgregor, who, after the manner of his kind, cherished a profound belief in his powers of negotiation. From Macgregor the Ghilzais cunningly obtained permission for a body of so-called friendly Afghans to lodge themselves close to his quarters and virtually within the British encampment. On the night of the 17th these amicable individuals fired a volley, which brought down a British officer and thirty men, as a signal to the tribesmen without; and the Ghilzais fell fiercely upon the camp. Monteith, a cool and resolute soldier, was quite equal to the occasion, and repulsed the enemy with some loss; but the Ghilzais managed to carry off eight camels, which was a sufficient encouragement to them, and a serious loss, in the circumstances, to the transport-department. 1841. Oct.

Then Sale awoke to his blunder; and, having obtained an additional battalion from Kabul, he marched away to join Monteith, which he did without difficulty or molestation on the 20th. He then drew additional camels from the capital, and, with his force now made up to respectable strength, marched eastward on the 22nd for Tezin.[1] The Ghilzais offered no opposition until the column issued from the mouth of the deep defile that opens on to the Tezin valley, when they were found assembled in some strength and seemingly inclined to make a stand. A few rounds of shrapnel sufficed to shift them, and the force moved into the plain with little further trouble. But someone, presumably Dennie, thought fit to push up a detachment, without adequate support, against parties of the enemy on the heights, with the result that the assailants went too far, found themselves overpowered by numbers and had to return with indecent haste. The casualties were not very heavy, though one officer of the Thirteenth was killed and two more officers were wounded; but it was not wholesome that even a few British soldiers

[1] H.M. 13th, 35th and 37th Bengal N.I., 1 squadron 5th Bengal Cavalry, 1 troop 2nd Cavalry, Abbott's battery, Backhouse's mountain-battery, Broadfoot's sappers, 200 Afghan irregular infantry.

1841. Oct. should have run down for their lives into the plain with the Afghans in hot pursuit.

However, there was Sale in the valley with the fort and the possessions of a leading Ghilzai chief within his grasp; and the chief did not relish his presence. Sale gave orders for the attack on his principal fort next day, and all was in train for the operation when a messenger presented himself to Macgregor, tendering the submission of the chief and of his leading subordinates, and begging that his stronghold might be spared. Unwarned by the treacherous conduct of the Ghilzais to Monteith at Khurd Kabul, Macgregor readily entertained the overture, and persuaded Sale to defer the attack. Negotiations were begun, and continued for some days, with the result that on the 25th Macgregor agreed to restore to the chiefs their old scale of salary, or blackmail, and to make other concessions with which they professed themselves content. Macgregor avowed himself a little doubtful of the good faith of the Ghilzais, but was anxious, seemingly, almost at any cost to get the troops out of the Tezin valley. He appears not to have reflected that the chiefs were even more solicitous for the same object; but it is difficult to realise all the various factors in the situation. For one thing, Sale had started with three to four thousand cattle along a route where forage was scarcely to be found, and with no arrangement made for feeding them. Providentially, two days' supply was discovered at Tezin, otherwise the unfortunate beasts must have starved; and it may have been this question of forage which made Macgregor so eager to come to terms. On the other hand, this same forage might have been taken by force, and such capture would probably have been the heaviest blow that could have been dealt at the Ghilzais. In any case Macgregor decided to soothe the chiefs with bribes, and thereby gave them the funds that they needed to continue the insurrection. Macnaghten was not too well pleased with the agreement, for he had hoped that Sale would have given the

insurgents a severe lesson; and yet he welcomed the settlement, however unsatisfactory, because he was frightened.[1] 1841. Oct.

The Ghilzai rebellion had brought home to him for the first time that, in hill fighting, the regular troops were at a disadvantage. The Afghans, he wrote, were more agile, and their long matchlocks, or *jezails*, outranged the musket. The former of these two statements could not be disputed, and indeed the fact was nothing very novel nor startling. As to the inferiority of the musket to the *jezail*, that depended chiefly on the calibre of the latter weapon, some of which were so heavy that they were fired from rests and would throw a bullet eight hundred yards; but Sir Charles Napier claimed later to have proved that the musket was the superior weapon, and, even if it were not, the British artillery should have sufficed to redress any balance in its disfavour. But in truth there seems to have been no warrant for this sudden panic about the musket beyond the ill-managed and unnecessary skirmish of a few score men with the Afghans on the 22nd of October. It is a fact that the muskets of the Thirteenth were worn out; and it is probable that Sale, had he looked for more than a peaceful march back to India, would have obtained leave to replace them with new weapons, of which there were plenty in store at Kabul. But men who have run away from the enemy generally seize the first excuse for their misbehaviour; and it is just possible that Sale may have made the most of this excuse from jealousy of his own regiment's honour. Still, as Wellington said, only proper management was needed to enable British troops to hold their own against any natives of any hills whatever. Macnaghten, on the other hand, countenanced the distrust of the musket, made it a pretext for continuing his old false policy of buying his enemies instead of fighting them, and thus contributed at once to the heartening of the

[1] Durand, pp. 335-339; Broadfoot, *Career of Major Broadfoot*, pp. 34, 35; Kaye, i. 630-633.

1841. Oct. enemy and the demoralisation of his own troops. Nothing could at this juncture have been more fatal. The concession was truly construed by the Afghans as evidence of British weakness, and they quietly pursued their plans against the invaders with confidence.[1]

Having reached Tezin, Sale, considering that his transport-animals were insufficient for his needs, resolved to leave behind a part of his force and to continue his advance, taking all the transport with him. He therefore ordered the Thirty-seventh Native Infantry, three companies of Broadfoot's sappers and three mountain-guns back to Kabar Jabar, between Tezin and Khurd Kabul, and there left them isolated, with three narrow defiles between them and Kabul, and with no means of movement—a proceeding which betrayed, not for the first time, his utter unfitness to command. Meanwhile, during the days wasted in negotiation, the Ghilzais had matured their preparations for resisting his passage through the two next defiles to eastward; but Sale had at least the good sense to attach little value to Macgregor's treaty with the Ghilzais, and eluded the ambush by moving over the high ground to the south. Had he possessed the sense to perceive it, he might have wheeled northward, engaged the Ghilzais with an impassable chasm in their rear, and annihilated them; but probably neither he nor Dennie knew the ground well enough to turn the opportunity to advantage. Thus, having left Tezin on the 26th, he reached the valley of Jagdalak on the 29th, not without petty affairs with his rear-guard, but otherwise unmolested. From Jagdalak the road for three miles ascended a ravine, very trying for laden camels and gun-horses, and commanded by heights on each side, until the summit was reached from which began the long descent to Gandamak. At Gandamak itself was stationed a corps of Shah Shuja's irregular infantry,

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 16 of 1841, Macnaghten to Indian government, Oct. 26, 1841; Kaye, i. 632*n*. See Wellington's scathing memo. quoted in Kaye, i. 654.

part of which might easily have been employed to seize the summit and hold it until Sale had traversed the defile of Jagdalak; but these troops could not move without the orders of Macnaghten; and so simple a matter of co-operation did not occur to "the gentleman who was employed to command the army." 1841.

Sale, for his part—or Dennie for him—took suitable measures for the protection of his march. Flanking-parties were detached both from the advanced guard and from the main body, with orders to hold the heights until the baggage had passed, and then to fall down and come on in rear of it; and the rear-guard was made up of four companies of infantry, two of them taken from the Thirteenth, two field-guns, three mountain-guns and a company of sappers—some four to five hundred men in all. The Ghilzais made such feeble opposition that the summit was easily won, and command of the pass and of the long descent to Gandamak was assured. Thereupon, Dennie[1] went forward quite happily with the main body of the column, leaving the baggage and rear-guard to take care of itself. The Ghilzais promptly attacked the latter with vigour. The four companies, finding themselves deserted and alone, were seized with panic and ran forward in confusion to get out of the pass, with the concealed Ghilzais firing into them from either flank, and the villagers bounding after them, knife in hand. There seemed every likelihood that the rear-guard and drivers would be cut to pieces, and that the whole of the baggage would be captured. Half-a-dozen British officers, however, showed a bold front; a handful of Broadfoot's sappers stood nobly by him and checked the rush of the villagers; the fugitives of the rear-guard were rallied, and the arrival of reinforcements from the main body made everything secure. By nightfall the rear-guard had arrived safely at Surkhab; but the casualties amounted Oct. 29.

[1] I suppose that Dennie was responsible; but the proceeding was equally characteristic of Sale, and the fault may have been Sale's.

1841. to over one hundred and twenty, among which were
Oct. 29. one British officer killed, besides four men of the Thirteenth, and three officers and forty-two men of the Thirteenth wounded. Furthermore, seventy camels were carried off, and much baggage was taken. Finally, for the second time within a week, both British and native Indian troops had run away from Afghans. The whole affair was discreditable to the last degree to the chief commander. It may, indeed, be pleaded for him that the Ghilzais were bound by treaty not to attack; and it is possible that Macgregor may have intervened with ill-timed advice. But that an officer, who had made excellent and successful dispositions for forcing the pass, should ruin all by hurrying the main column away from his rear-guard, was unpardonable.[1]

Oct. 30. On the following day Sale's column without further molestation marched into Gandamak, all ranks, with the exception of a few individual officers, feeling depressed and discouraged. During the next week not a word reached it from Kabul; but rumours came in of an outbreak at the capital, with contradictory
Nov. 4. accounts of the issue. On the 4th of November arrived definite news that a great chief in the vicinity had occupied a fort within four miles of the camp, and was about to raise the whole district in rebellion. Macgregor, who happened to be dining with Broadfoot and the artillery-officers, at their instigation went to Sale and urged him to attack at once, but returned at midnight to report that he had failed. The officers then sought out Havelock, who with great difficulty persuaded Sale to sanction an advance upon the hostile
Nov. 5. fort on the afternoon of the 5th. The Afghans fled at the first sight of the advanced guard; and, though they escaped with little loss, the incident had the best effect in restoring the moral spirit of Sale's troops, and lowering that of the enemy. But this was no thanks

[1] Durand, p. 343; Broadfoot, *Career of Major Broadfoot*, pp. 36-39; Lady Sale's *Journal*, p. 31.

either to Sale or to Dennie, though it would have been hard to find two men of greater physical bravery. 1841. Nov.

Meanwhile at Kabul the crisis had at last come. At the end of September, Henry Pottinger had arrived at Kabul from Kohistan to report that he considered a rising in that quarter to be certain, and to entreat for reinforcements. Macnaghten, with the Ghilzai insurrection heavy upon his back, could only answer that compliance was impossible; and the Kohistanis, taking courage from their own immunity and from the reports of Ghilzai success, nursed their projects for vengeance. On the night of the 1st of November a number of them came into Kabul, and there, meeting some of the Ghilzai insurgents and others of the disaffected, concerted with them their plans for the morrow. The troops at the moment were disposed as follows. Shelton was encamped on the Sia Sang hills, a mile and a half south-east of the cantonments and east of the Bala Hissar, with the Forty-fourth Foot, half of the Fifty-fourth Native Infantry, a battalion of the Shah's infantry, the Fifth Bengal Cavalry, and a battery of European horse-artillery. In cantonments were the Fifth Bengal Native Infantry, three companies of Broadfoot's sappers, two troops of irregular horse and one field-battery. In the Bala Hissar, as guard to the Shah, were about eighteen hundred of his own troops, regular and irregular, and several guns. The supplies and stores were scattered about in various forts, as shall presently be described in detail; but the treasure, through unpardonable neglect or insane over-confidence, was kept in a house in the city, about nine hundred yards north-west of the Bala Hissar and approachable only through narrow streets, unless by following the southern skirt of the city. In another house close to the Treasury lived Burnes, who was hated as the man who had first brought the foreigners into Afghanistan, who had accompanied Sale in his punitive expedition to Kohistan, and who, above all, had made very free with the Afghan women. To kill Burnes and sack the Treasury

1841. appealed alike to Afghan vindictiveness and Afghan cupidity; and with this blow the insurgents had planned to open the revolt.

Nov. 2. Accordingly, in the early hours of the 2nd of November, the rebels, having occupied the adjacent houses, opened fire upon Burnes's dwelling and the Treasury. Burnes sent a hurried note to inform Macnaghten, but, thinking that the attack was some petty riot, restrained the sepoy guard from returning the fire, and went out to harangue the mob. Very soon he and all with him were fighting desperately for their lives. Shah Shuja, hearing the sound of musketry, sent one of his regiments, known as Campbell's Hindustanis, with two guns under command of one of his sons, to quell the outbreak; but the foolish commander, trying to make his way through the narrow, tortuous streets, placed his troops at the mercy of the populace, which handled them very roughly. The Shah, however, sent word to the envoy that all was well with Burnes, and Macnaghten seems not at first to have realised the danger. Shelton had at the first sound of firing got his men under arms, but as late as 10 A.M. he received a message from Macnaghten saying that all was quiet and bidding him stand fast. After waiting for an hour, Shelton sent Captain Sturt with a small escort to ascertain what was going on; and in half-an-hour a trooper returned to say that Sturt had been stabbed on entering the precincts of the palace, and that Shelton was to advance. He moved off at once, with the men that Elphinstone had at the outset ordered him to hold ready, to the Bala Hissar, and was met by a rude message from the Shah asking him why he had come. Shelton, after waiting for another hour, sent another officer to obtain intelligence. In due time this officer reported that he had met fugitives from Campbell's regiment flying from the city into the Bala Hissar, who told him that they had been utterly cut up. Shelton sent down a company to cover their retreat, but though they brought their two guns out of the city, they were

unable to get them into the citadel and left them under the ramparts, dismounted, where the fire from the citadel effectually prevented the Afghans from carrying them off.[1] 1841 Nov. 2.

Long before this—apparently by 9 A.M.—the guards at the Treasury and at Burnes's house had been overpowered, Burnes himself, with two other British officers, had been slain, and the treasure had been seized by the insurgents. Shelton has been much blamed for not acting with greater vigour, but he was deliberately kept idle in his camp until long after the mischief had been done; and it seems that he did recommend, though in vain, an immediate joint attack upon the city from the Bala Hissar and from cantonments.[2] Macnaghten himself appears to have taken long to realise the seriousness of the situation, and at first to have lost his head, for he and his wife left the residency and came into cantonments before 11 A.M. He is said to have called upon Elphinstone to act, but he took matters into his own hands when he ordered Shelton to stand fast. Elphinstone himself, who had expected to leave Kabul in company with Macnaghten on the 1st of November, was and knew himself to be unfit in body and mind to deal with any grave trouble.[3] The only measures that he had taken were to send Shelton with about fourteen hundred men into the Bala Hissar, to order the rest of his troops from Sia Sang into cantonments, to mount guns on the rampart of the cantonments, and to recall the Thirty-seventh Native Infantry from the dangerous situation in which it had been left by the stupidity of Sale.

Yet the attacks of the enemy had not been confined to Burnes's house and the Treasury. In a fort at the western end of the city were stored, under charge of Captain Colin Mackenzie, the supplies for the Shah's

[1] Lady Sale's *Journal*, pp. 35, 38-41.

[2] Hough, p. 13 *n*.

[3] "If anything were to turn up, I am unfit for it, done up body and mind, and I have told Lord Auckland so." Broadfoot, p. 28.

1841. Nov. 2. troops, where also were the quarters of Brigadier-general Anquetil, commandant of the Shah's regular forces. Within forty yards of it was another house, the residence of his brigade-major, Captain Troup, which was easily defensible against musketry; and seven hundred yards to south-west of these was a strong tower, which was occupied by Captain Trevor, and which could easily have been prepared for defence. The guard assigned to the fort and the brigade-major's house consisted of a native officer and thirty sepoys, but about one hundred and fifty of the Shah's irregular infantry were close by, and immediately to south of the fort lay the quarter of the Kizilbashis—Persians descended from colonists who had emigrated to Kabul at the time of Nadir Shah and were friendly to Shah Shuja and the British. On the morning of the 2nd of November, Captain Mackenzie received warning of the insurrection and made ready to defend himself; but, while still engaged in his preparations, he was attacked by a large mob of armed Afghans. Not without difficulty he held his own until the afternoon, when, as ammunition was running short, he contrived to pass a message through to Trevor, who forwarded it at once to cantonments, asking at least for cartridges and, if possible, for reinforcements. Neither the one nor the other arrived, and Mackenzie was fain to make the best dispositions that he could for the night, conscious that the Afghans were undermining his defences, but powerless to prevent them. Yet the Shah's irregulars and the Kizilbash leaders had been ready, on the first sight of a British bayonet moving towards Mackenzie's fort, to strike in with him against the insurgents.[1]

Here, therefore, was one matter which demanded immediate action. Troops must be sent without delay to reinforce Mackenzie, and either to bring off the supplies of grain, or destroy them. There was another not less urgent. The Commissariat fort, in which

[1] Eyre, *Kabul Insurrection of 1841–42*, Appendix A.

the victuals of the British troops had, with such fatuous carelessness, been lodged, was flanked, as has been told, to west by the Shah's garden and to north-west by the building known as Mohamed Sherif's fort. There was yet another fort, Mahmoud Khan's, about five hundred yards south of the south-eastern wall of the cantonments, which commanded the nearest road to the Bala Hissar. So far Elphinstone seemed to be divided in his mind whether to hold the Bala Hissar or the cantonments, for he had occupied both; but whatever his ultimate decision, it was imperative to seize at once and to hold, temporarily if not permanently, the Shah's garden and the three forts above named, for he had only three days' provisions within cantonments. The general was in a cruel position, for he had inherited all the blunders of Cotton and of Macnaghten, and the Governor-general had cancelled his one effort to make them good. Macnaghten, moreover, was still interfering, for he had prevented Elphinstone from occupying Mohamed Sherif's fort on the first day of the outbreak.[1] But there was still time to make good this mistake by night; and then it could be decided whether to hold the cantonments or to move the entire force into the Bala Hissar. Meanwhile, the readiest remedy for all difficulties was to strike hard at the insurgents in Kabul itself.

1841. Nov. 2

Unfortunately, all was irresolution in the cantonments, as was natural seeing that there were two commanders. Moreover, Elphinstone, unable at the best of times to walk and rarely able even to ride, had sustained a severe fall from his horse on the 2nd, and had been much hurt and shaken. Remembering the stories of Buenos Ayres and Rosetta, he shrank from Shelton's proposal to attack the city from two sides, and threw himself upon the counsel of Macnaghten.[2] Neither the one nor the other seems to have given a thought to Mackenzie, which might have given them the key

Nov. 3.

[1] Kaye, ii. 30 *n.*

[2] Kaye, ii. 26.

1841. to their subsequent operations by rallying the Kizil-
Nov. 3. bashis to their side. At daybreak of the 3rd there was an alarm of the enemy approaching from the east. It turned out to be Major Griffiths with the detachment from Khurd Kabul. Though beset by Ghilzais on front, flanks and rear, he had fought his way through them, and reached the cantonments after twelve hours' march in perfect order, having lost not one scrap of baggage, suffered little more than thirty casualties, and shown conclusively that, under an officer of skill and resolution, the British had little to fear from the Afghans. This was a welcome reinforcement, but Elphinstone allowed the whole morning to pass away in inactivity. The excitement among the population was very great, and the villagers from all sides were swarming into Kabul in such numbers that the road between cantonments and the city was barely passable. It was in such circumstances that at 3 P.M. of a November day Elphinstone detached two companies of sepoys and one of the Forty-fourth, perhaps two hundred men, with two guns, under Major Swayne, to march to the Lahore or north-eastern gate of Kabul, and there co-operate with Shelton in an attack upon the city. Through the stupidity of Elphinstone's staff Swayne took the longest and most dangerous road, moving south-west past Mohamed Sherif's fort and the Shah's garden to the Kohistan gate. Thus he encountered so galling a fire from both of these places and from Mahmoud Khan's fort, that, having lost an officer and several men, and seeing the whole road under the north side of the city to be held by the enemy, he returned to cantonments. If Elphinstone had sent two thousand men betimes in the morning, he might have accomplished something, but he was so apprehensive of an attack upon the cantonments, which were too extensive for his force to defend, that he took the fatal course of sparing only driblets of troops to take the offensive. On this same afternoon, however, he sent from cantonments to the Bala

Hissar half a battalion of infantry, three mountain- 1841.
guns and four more pieces of artillery, though of what Nov. 3.
service mountain-guns could be in the citadel, and why it was thought necessary to strengthen its garrison at all, it is hard to say. Macnaghten meanwhile wrote urgently to Nott to send him two battalions from Kandahar, and to Sale to march back immediately with his brigade to Kabul.

In the course of the forenoon of this day the insurgents seized Captain Trevor's tower (though Trevor and his family contrived to escape), and with the fire of their *jezails* from the summit drove the defenders from the western face of Mackenzie's fort. All through the afternoon they pressed Mackenzie himself so closely, bringing up fuel to burn down his gate, that he had no alternative but to evacuate the fort under cover of night. After a desperate personal encounter with a party of Afghans, he brought the survivors of his little force safe into cantonments. But the stores of grain were of course lost, representing some three weeks' rations, on half allowance, for the entire garrison. To discourage the troops still further, and to convince them of the incompetence of their leaders, there came in on this same day the news that a Kohistani regiment of the Shah's service had mutinied, murdered its two British officers, and was doubtless on its way from its station, twenty miles to north-west, to join the insurgents at Kabul.

The morning of the 4th brought with it a formid- Nov. 4.
able menace. The enemy occupied in force the Shah's garden and Mohamed Sherif's fort, thereby effectually cutting off communication between the cantonments and the Commissariat fort, which last was held by Ensign Warren and eighty men. Elphinstone, evidently not in possession of his senses, ordered one company of sepoys and eleven camels laden with ammunition to go to Warren's relief. The party was beaten back, and their officer was killed. The general then directed two companies of the Forty-fourth, perhaps

1841. one hundred men, to go out and bring back Warren
Nov. 4. and his garrison. They also were repulsed, with the loss of two officers and four men killed and three officers and sixteen men wounded. In the evening a third party, this time of the Fifth Cavalry, was sent out. They galloped boldly up to the gate of the Shah's garden, but found the gate shut in their faces, and were forced to return with eight troopers killed and fourteen badly wounded. The fatuity with which the lives of valuable officers and men were thus thrown away piecemeal is almost incredible; yet the facts are true.

Then Elphinstone's commissary rushed to him and pointed out that, if the Commissariat fort were given up, there would be sacrificed not only all the provisions of the force, but all the medical stores, rum and spare clothing, and that he knew not how further supplies could be obtained. Realising now, apparently for the first time, that the loss of his victuals would mean starvation, Elphinstone despatched orders to Warren to hold out to the last extremity. This message never reached Warren; but meanwhile he reported that the enemy were undermining one of his towers, that he could not prevent them, and that some of his men had already slipped away and escaped to cantonments. The answer returned was that he should be reinforced by two o'clock next morning. At nine o'clock that evening there was a meeting of officers at Elphinstone's house, when Macnaghten urged that, unless Mohamed Sherif's fort were taken that very night, the Commissariat fort would be lost. It was very characteristic that the envoy, after forbidding the occupation of Mohamed Sherif's fort when it might have been effected without bloodshed, insisted upon it now at any sacrifice of life. Elphinstone hesitated. Spies were sent out; Sturt, who was lying prostrate with wounds that hardly allowed him to speak, was consulted; and at last, after hours of vacillation, troops—apparently two companies—were ordered to be ready at 4 A.M. to

attack Mohamed Sherif's fort and to reinforce Warren. 1841.
It was past daylight before they could be collected, and Nov. 5.
just as they were about to march off, in came Warren with his garrison. Despairing of help, and expecting to be overwhelmed at any moment, for the enemy had set fire to the gate, he had knocked a hole in one of the walls, and crept back to cantonments. Now, therefore, all the supplies of the garrison of Kabul were in the enemy's hands, and there was left in the cantonment just one day's victuals.

The troops, of course, were furious. They knew that with proper management they could take the fort with ease, whereas many lives had been wasted with the result that there was now no prospect of food, and—a serious matter to the Europeans—absolute failure of rum. But if there was one thing that Elphinstone never lacked, it was councillors; and now Lieutenant Eyre approached him with a new plan for storming Mohamed Sherif's fort. Powder-bags were prepared to blow in the gate, two horse-artillery guns were told off to cover the advance of the storming-party; and at noon two companies of the Fifth Native Infantry, under Captain Swayne, moved out under cover of a wall towards the fort. The guns fired for twenty minutes; the infantry, without leaving their cover, expended the whole of their ammunition; and Elphinstone, who was watching the proceedings, recalled the entire party. Eyre, who was in charge of the two guns, complained of Swayne's unwillingness to rush forward with his men. It was perhaps discreditable, but after what had happened on the 4th of November it was not surprising.

On the morning of the 6th, Sturt, the only engineer Nov. 6.
with the force, having fretted himself almost into madness over the general mismanagement of affairs, staggered out of bed in his shirt and pyjamas to superintend a scientific attack on the fort by breach and assault. Starting at six o'clock, he managed to obtain the consent of Elphinstone and to get three nine-pounders and two heavy howitzers into position; and

1841. at ten, he opened fire. At noon the storming-party—
Nov. 6. one company of the Forty-fourth and two of sepoys, in all about one hundred and fifty men—made their rush and carried the fort without hesitation, though not without some loss. This method might perfectly well have been adopted from the first; but apparently no one had the brains, nor the energy, to employ it but an officer who had been terribly wounded four days earlier, and was still so weak that he could not put on his clothes.[1] However, here was at least a little success, but Elphinstone could not be brought to follow it up. The Commissariat fort, which had been but half emptied by the enemy, was not recaptured. The Shah's garden was shelled, and the insurgents were driven from it by a party of Colin Mackenzie's irregular infantry; but, being unsupported, Mackenzie was obliged to fall back with considerable loss. In the plain to the west of cantonments also a reconnoitring-party brought on engagement which gradually drew the whole of Elphinstone's cavalry into action against very superior numbers. More than one successful charge was headed by British officers with distinguished gallantry; but they were not adequately supported, and accomplished nothing permanent. Elphinstone was particularly chary of his artillery, constantly sending out small parties with a single gun, though Lake had laid down in orders in 1806 that, where one gun was needed, two at least must always be employed, lest the one should be put out of action by growing too hot. Yet artillery was the arm which outranged all weapons of the Afghans; and tumultuous bands of tribesmen, mounted or afoot, could never stand many rounds of shrapnel in the open. But a man who used companies where he should have used battalions would naturally use single guns where he should have used batteries.

After the operations of the 6th the enemy were quiet for a day, having taken harder blows than they had given. But already Elphinstone was urging upon

[1] Lady Sale's *Journal*, pp. 33-34, 61.

Macnaghten the expediency of coming to terms with the insurgents. Since the news of the mutiny of the Kohistani regiment, intelligence had come in that the Gurkha battalion at Charikar was closely beset, that most of its British officers had been killed, that the water-supply had been cut off, and in fact that its annihilation was practically inevitable. Macnaghten's sins were finding him out in terrible succession, and he had no resource but his old policy of bribing the Afghan chiefs, though he now added to this the new expedient of hiring assassins to make away with the most formidable of them.[1] It was all very pitiful, for the envoy was a brave man, and had he been a soldier, would have struck boldly and decisively; but unfortunately he did not know even his own business, and mismanaged diplomatic as disastrously as military affairs. By trying to buy off the hostility of one tribe after another, instead of securing the friendship of one only, he offered a premium to the sept that should prove itself most formidable, and kept them all waiting in expectation round Kabul. 1841. Nov. 6.

On the 7th the enemy recovered themselves. They had found two British guns in the repairing shops, which, with the usual carelessness, had been set up in the city instead of in the Bala Hissar; and, having mounted them in Mahmoud Khan's fort, they opened fire upon the cantonment with such rude ammunition as they could improvise. On the 9th Macnaghten persuaded Elphinstone to recall Shelton from the Bala Hissar and entrust the future guidance of military affairs to him. Shelton came over accordingly, escorted by one of the Shah's regular battalions, a company of the Forty-fourth and two guns, and brought a small supply of grain with him. For the rest, the garrison in cantonments depended upon such provisions as Macnaghten, by means of liberal bribes, was able to get in from the village of Behmaru; and the whole question of the future military policy really Nov. 7. Nov. 9.

[1] Kaye, ii. 37-42, 56-58.

1841. Nov. 9. turned upon the vital matter of supplies. More than one officer had already perceived that the design of the Afghans was to starve the British out. The stupendous imbecility of Elphinstone had given them every chance of prosecuting that design with success. It remained to be seen what decision an able-bodied officer of long and wide experience would take upon succeeding to this most undesirable command.

But the first difficulty was that Elphinstone, instead of putting himself on the sick list and effacing himself altogether, insisted upon remaining supreme. He would not allow Shelton even to change the position of a gun on the rampart of the cantonments; and, though he had ample stores of ammunition, he was possessed by so morbid a dread lest it should fail, that he forbade the sentries to fire at robbers and assassins who were doing their work within a dozen yards of them.[1] But supposing that Elphinstone abdicated his powers, Macnaghten had no idea of parting with his own authority. The command therefore passed from the hands of an extremely inefficient duumvirate into those of a triumvirate, the third party being an extremely difficult, disagreeable, contradictious and obstinate man. But even he, as sole commander, would have been better than such a combination. The whole situation was complicated by the fact that Macnaghten looked every day for the arrival of Sale to put an end to his troubles, and was therefore disinclined to take any decisive step. But in any case the last state of the command at Kabul was worse than the first.

There was one principal question to be determined, namely, whether the British force should hold its ground at the capital or retreat. Macnaghten was strongly for the former course; and Sturt, from his sick-bed, had vehemently urged the withdrawal of all the troops into the Bala Hissar. To this the Shah, as always, objected, and consequently Macnaghten also, at any rate for the present. But though no one

[1] Mackenzie, p. 236.

doubted the ability of the British to hold their own in the citadel against the attacks of any number of Afghans, there was no certainty about supplies of water, food, forage and fuel. The wells, it seems, barely sufficed for the present inmates of the Bala Hissar, and a small stream which supplemented them would certainly be cut off. As to food, Elphinstone had sacrificed all that had been collected, and Macnaghten was keeping the garrison alive by bribing the villagers heavily to bring in grain in small quantities. But, even if the Commissariat fort had not been abandoned, the provisions therein would not have lasted beyond the end of January; and now it was at best doubtful whether the townsfolk would part with the victuals which they had laid up for the winter. Of course it was always possible to use force; but to fight, especially in a barricaded town, for every day's rations during a period of months would wear away the numbers of the garrison very rapidly. As to forage, there was precisely the same difficulty. The animals were already weak and half-famished, and it was pretty certain that the vast majority of them must perish. As to fuel, there seem to have been no misgivings; but it was practically certain that in the Bala Hissar there was not sufficient shelter against the cold. Already, though the real winter had not begun, the sepoys in the citadel were succumbing to exposure, sixty men having gone into hospital within a week with pneumonia, which generally proved fatal. Moreover, there were no medical stores, the whole of them having been abandoned in the Commissariat fort. On the whole, therefore, though the only chance for the British to hold their ground was to move into the Bala Hissar, it should seem that even this course would have been hazardous. It is true that with the coming of severe weather the tribes might have dispersed, though Macnaghten's system of bribes was admirably calculated to keep them assembled. It is possible, too, that the population of Kabul, overawed by the presence

1841. Nov. 9.

1841. Nov. 9. of a disciplined force in an impregnable position, might have sought reconciliation. But there was no reckoning upon this. The game was in their hands. They could starve the British out, if they wished, and there could be no question of the bitter and vindictive hatred which they nourished against the foreign invaders. For this was no ordinary rising of a few predatory tribes. For once the Afghans were united; and Mackeson and Macgregor, the political agents in the Khyber pass, pronounced gravely and truly that there was no saying where the trouble might end.

It should seem, therefore, that the correct military measure was immediate retreat, before the snow should fall; and this was advocated practically by every senior officer. Elphinstone, utterly unnerved and exhausted, was for securing it by negotiation. Shelton, who had gone through the retreats from Sahagun and Burgos, would have treated it as an ordinary military operation, difficult perhaps, but perfectly practicable; and the more so since Sale would be able to give help from Gandamak. There was no occasion to retire further than to Jalalabad, which was halfway to Peshawar; and the force could advance again upon Kabul, if necessary, in the ensuing spring. As to supplies, if enough could be collected to last through the winter at Kabul, it would be easy to raise enough for ten days' march. Any superfluous stores could be destroyed. The military reasons for such a retreat, indeed, seem to me to have been cogent and unanswerable; and, had the army alone been concerned, they might have prevailed. But the whole of Macnaghten's work was at stake, and, even if that had been abandoned as rotten, it was impossible for the army to leave the Shah behind. Moreover, not merely the Shah but the eight hundred members of his harem, their three or four thousand parasites, and their fifteen hundred camels must be brought away and fed; and this was a very serious matter. Retreat would have meant no discredit to the army, but it would have

ruined Macnaghten and heaped shame upon Auck- 1841.
land. Nov 9.

Moreover, Macnaghten did not give Shelton credit for basing his advice upon purely military grounds. Shelton had made no secret of his longing to return to India, and he by no means stood alone. The senior officers, indeed, were almost without exception despondent, not concealing their misgivings that they would never see India again. They knew the extreme peril of their situation and the precarious nature of their communications. They had seen their men ruined in spirit and discipline by the vagaries of Macnaghten, and they had made up their minds that the army was to be sacrificed to the caprice of the political agents, with the Governor-general at their head. That was one of the worst features in the prevailing discontent. The officers mistrusted the Supreme Government as thoroughly as they did Macnaghten; and unfortunately they had all too good reason. The spirit of the whole force was bad, so bad that the finer and bolder among the young officers declined to share in it; but it was not inexplicable. Possibly Macnaghten reckoned that the veteran Shelton would revive the tone of the troops. If so, he was disappointed, for Shelton was not only the gloomiest but the most offensive of the prophets of evil; and Macnaghten no doubt set down Shelton's eagerness for a retreat to sheer perversity and love of obstruction. It would have been hard to find two men worse assorted to work together, for both were self-assertive, both were pompous, both were ill-tempered and neither was a gentleman.

On the morning of the 10th the enemy, both horse Nov. 10.
and foot, crowned the heights of Behmaru on the west, and of Sia Sang on the east, in great force, as if to threaten attack upon the cantonments on both fronts. Only those on the east, however, after some delay descended into the plain, and occupied all the forts upon that side; maintaining an annoying fire of sharp-shooters from the Rika Bashi fort, seven hundred yards

1841. north-east of the north-eastern bastion of the canton-
Nov. 10. ments. The British answered by a steady fire of shells from two howitzers and as many mortars, which was kept up for two hours with apparently no great effect. Then Macnaghten, taking all responsibility upon himself, pressed Elphinstone to storm this fort; and at noon the Forty-fourth, the Thirty-seventh Native Infantry, one of the Shah's regular battalions, a party of irregular horse, and three light guns assembled at the eastern gate. A storming-party of two companies from each of the three battalions was told off; and Captain Bellew, Elphinstone's deputy quartermaster-general, ran forward with powder-bags to blow in the gate. It seems strange that a staff-officer, who, presumably, had drawn out the scheme of operations, should not have ascertained first where the gate was, but Bellew only blew open a small wicket, so strait that but two or three men could enter abreast, and so low that they had to stoop to enter at all. The result was that the foremost of the stormers were easily shot down; but a few officers, with a handful of Europeans and sepoys, none the less forced their way in, and the Afghans at once fled headlong out of the gate on the opposite side of the fort. Just at this moment, however, a party of Afghan horse wheeled round the corner of the fort towards the wicket; the cry of "cavalry" was raised; a native bugler sounded the retire; and the storming-party, despite of the entreaties of their officers, took to their heels. The Afghans returned to the attack in great numbers, and, in spite of a desperate resistance, cut down the few British within the fort, though one officer and a sepoy, finding a point of vantage, defended themselves with success. Meanwhile Shelton, perfectly calm and unmoved under a very hot fire, with great difficulty rallied the fugitives. The guns of the cantonments and a menace from the British cavalry sufficed to disperse the Afghan horse; and Shelton, though the men hesitated to follow him in a second trial, finally brought them forward to a

third and successful assault. They found the solitary officer and a single sepoy still safe, with a heap of over thirty dead Afghans before them; and the enemy promptly evacuated the rest of the forts. Shelton then marched his force towards the Sia Sang heights, and opened fire from his two horse-artillery guns, whereupon the enemy speedily dispersed, and presently disappeared from sight. 1841. Nov. 10.

The British casualties in this action, not including those of the Shah's battalion, exceeded one hundred, fully half of them being killed, and among them four European officers.[1] The whole affair was evidently ill-managed, and the only man who shone in it was Shelton, whose conduct seems to have excited general admiration and to have restored the confidence of the Forty-fourth. A panic is a thing with which no commander can reckon, but, considering that the Afghan horse was plainly visible within a few hundred yards of the fort, it is not clear why a body of cavalry was not held in readiness to keep them at a distance. According to one authority,[2] who wrote many years after the event, Shelton was responsible for this, though the most unfriendly of contemporary chronicles say nothing of it. However, the British were heartened and the Afghans discouraged by the results of the day. The Rika Bashi fort and another, the Zulficar fort, outside the northern face of the Mission enclosure, were occupied. Four more were destroyed, and four days' supply of grain was gathered from them in all. Furthermore, for the next three days the enemy dared not show themselves. The Commissariat animals went far afield and brought in supplies and forage unmolested; and even a single officer walked three miles from the cantonment without seeing an enemy. Best of all, the Forty-fourth regained their trust in Shelton.[3]

[1] Eyre says 200 casualties, but Lady Sale's more exact figures seem to lower the number to 150.

[2] Lawrence, *Forty-three Years in India*, p. 82.

[3] Lawrence, *Forty-three Years in India*, p. 83. The account of the action is based on the narratives of Eyre and Lady Sale, pp. 87-92.

1841. Nov. Little was done on the ensuing days beyond the bombardment of Mahmoud Khan's fort. Owing to the great extent of the cantonments the troops were already overworked; the spirit of enterprise was not strong in the military leaders; and, owing to the weakness of Elphinstone, discipline was steadily deteriorating. Nov. 13. On the 13th the enemy again presented themselves in force on the Behmaru hills, and opened fire from two guns upon the cantonments. At noon Macnaghten urged that a force should be sent out to dislodge them and capture the guns; and meeting, as usual, with objection from Elphinstone, he finally gave positive orders to that effect. Accordingly, at 3 P.M., Shelton was sent out with sixteen companies of infantry, four squadrons of horse, one horse-artillery gun and one mountain gun;[1] roughly speaking, about fourteen hundred infantry and three hundred and fifty cavalry. The advance was made in three columns, which seem to have raced each other for the hill, while the single horse-artillery gun—the only efficient piece with the force—was stuck fast in a water-course. The infantry pressed up the ascent, the Afghan horse standing firm on the summit, and poured in a volley at ten or twelve yards' range which did no execution whatever. Thereupon a party of about fifty Afghans charged and drove one column in confusion to the foot of the hill, till the horse-artillery gun, coming up at last, tore the Afghan ranks with shrapnel and grape, and the British cavalry, charging in turn, drove the enemy again to the top of the hill. The British infantry, rallying, advanced once more; and the enemy fled, abandoning their two guns, one of which was spiked and the other brought in. Darkness forbade any pursuit,[2] and the enemy took advantage of it to follow Shelton's people

[1] 6 companies 44th, 6 companies 37th N.I., 4 companies Shah's Infantry; 2 sq. 5th Bengal L.C., 2 sq. irregular horse.

[2] Lawrence says that if Shelton had pursued he might have entered Kabul on the backs of the fugitives and taken the city. But his animus for Macnaghten and against Shelton makes his judgement doubtful.

back to cantonments with much shouting and firing, but little, if any, real mischief. 1841. Nov. 13.

The casualties in this skirmish seem not to have been very heavy, but they included two of the best officers of Elphinstone's staff, both of whom were severely wounded. It was not a good sign that such men should leave the general to do regimental duty on such an occasion. The harmlessness of the volley was another bad sign, pointing to the probability that the men's muskets had been loaded several hours—possibly even one or two days—before, and had been left lying against the rampart, where the powder had become damp.[1] With proper discipline such a thing should have been impossible. It is difficult, too, to explain why more guns were not sent out, for, with skilful handling of these and of the cavalry, the enemy might have been driven from their cannon and severely punished. But nothing ordered by Macnaghten was kindly executed by Elphinstone and Shelton; though, if the general were bound to obey the envoy, he might just as well have sent out his troops earlier and laid his plans to strike a really telling blow.

On the 15th Major Eldred Pottinger and Lieutenant Haughton rode in, more dead than alive, to cantonments, to report that they and two Gurkhas were the only survivors of the garrison of Charikar and had themselves escaped by miracle. Both were wounded, Haughton so desperately that through a dreary ride of sixty miles he had been supported in the saddle by a man on each side. Here was another sacrifice—that of an entire battalion—to the ignorance of Macnaghten; and the fact was not lost upon the troops at Kabul. Then came tidings that Captain Woodburn, with one hundred and fifty of the Shah's infantry, had been treacherously inveigled into a fort near Ghazni, and that his entire party had been destroyed. Finally, on the 17th, came a rumour, confirmed by a letter on the 18th, that Sale, despite of the repeated orders of Nov. 15.

[1] See Lady Sale's *Journal*, p. 151; Hough, p. 34 *n*.

1841. Nov. Macnaghten, had not marched for Kabul, but in the contrary direction for Jalalabad.

Our last sight of Sale was upon his arrival at Gandamak on the 30th of October. On the 5th of November rumours began to reach him of the rising at Kabul, but, all regular communication being cut off, it was not until the 10th that he received what seems to have been the last of Macnaghten's urgent appeals that he should return to the capital. Thereupon he called a council of war, which pronounced that obedience to the envoy's order was inadvisable, or, as Sale himself put it, impossible. His reasons were that he had three hundred wounded, not transport enough, owing to the desertion of his hired drivers, to carry one day's rations, no depôts on the road, and ammunition sufficient for two days' fighting only, whereas he needed enough for six days. It may be remarked that the number of the wounded, and the deficiency both of transport and of ammunition, were all due principally to Sale's own mismanagement in leaving his rear-guard to take care of itself, and enabling the enemy to wound men and capture camels and munitions as they would. Macnaghten had urged him to throw his wounded into some fort with a guard to protect them; but Sale pleaded that he had not provisions enough to feed both such a detachment for an uncertain period and his own men on their march to Kabul. It is difficult to say whether or not he could have obeyed Macnaghten's order, if he had wished. Probably he could, though not without risk; and at least one critic has dealt with him sternly upon this assumption. But very certainly he did not wish; and it seems that Elphinstone was of the same mind, for he heartily applauded Sale's decision.[1] In these circumstances, it seems to me hard to blame Sale for not marching to Kabul.

But why Sale should have made for Jalalabad, a

[1] Mackenzie, i. 227-228; *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 18 of 1841, Macnaghten to Macgregor, Nov. 9; Sale to Mackeson and to Macnaghten, Nov. 11; Elphinstone to Sale, Nov. 28, 1841—"Vous avez très bien fait."

ruined fortress, without magazines and without military strength or importance, is not so easy to explain. He would have been quite as strong, quite as well off, and far more menacing at Gandamak. He would have threatened continually the passes to Kabul, kept a large portion of the Ghilzais inactively watching him, and struck misgiving and anxiety into all the host of the Afghans to the north. If he set himself diligently to collect supplies and transport, he might, as the wounded gradually recovered, have made a dash for Kabul after all, and at least, if Elphinstone decided ultimately to retreat, he might have facilitated the operation enormously. But he evidently partook strongly of the general feeling that, the more nearly he approached to India, the better was his chance of quitting the detested Afghanistan for good. The force at Kabul or at Gandamak might be sacrificed by the Supreme Government, but hardly a brigade at Jalalabad. It is humiliating that such ideas should ever have occurred to a British general or to any British officer; but such was the pass to which the rule of Auckland, Macnaghten and the political element generally had brought the British Army.[1] 1841. Nov.

Here, then, was the situation at Kabul so far simplified. Sale's brigade was known to have moved away, and it was tolerably certain that no help could be forthcoming from Kandahar. As a matter of fact, Nott had, on receipt of Macnaghten's order, sent off two battalions towards Kabul, though unwillingly, for he felt sure that they would be stopped by snow between Ghazni and the capital; and he proved to be right, for the battalions were obliged to retrace their steps to Kandahar, having lost many of their transport-cattle through exposure. On the 19th, therefore, Macnaghten addressed to Elphinstone an official letter, asking him what he proposed to do. He added that Nov. 19.

[1] Durand, p. 360. See the account of the Council of War at Jalalabad in Broadfoot's *Career of Major Broadfoot*, pp. 65-77, and Shelton's comment in Lady Sale's *Journal*, p. 107.

1841. he himself thought it his duty to hold on to the cantonments for as long as possible, for a retreat would mean dishonour and much sacrifice of public property, and withdrawal into the Bala Hissar would be little less disastrous on every account than retreat. He advised, therefore, postponement of any decision for eight or ten days, during which "something might turn up in our favour". Meanwhile, the enemy remained inactive, and allowed supplies in small quantities, chiefly through the village of Behmaru, to be gathered into cantonments. This apathy puzzled the garrison, and probably encouraged Macnaghten, but it was not of long duration.

Nov. 22. On the morning of the 22nd large bodies of Afghan horse and foot issued from the city, and moved to the summit of the Behmaru heights. Macnaghten thereupon urged Elphinstone to forestall the enemy in the occupation of the village, which lies at the eastern end; and a detachment of half a battalion of the Fifth Native Infantry, three troops of horse, and a single gun of the mountain-train, under Major Swayne, were sent out. On reaching the village, however, Swayne was greeted by a very sharp fire, and, putting his infantry under cover, kept up an useless fusillade upon the houses. Meanwhile a single horse-artillery gun, which had been despatched after him, unlimbered on the plain and played upon the summit of the ridge, offering, together with the cavalry drawn up in its rear, a very good target for the Afghan marksmen in the village. So matters went on for some five or six hours from the late forenoon until evening, when Shelton was sent out with the rest of the Fifth to bring Swayne's party in. Later, a council of war was held at which it was determined, at Macnaghten's instance, that Shelton should on the following morning take the village by assault and hold the summit of the ridge against all attacks. It seems that the object was to establish a permanent post for the domination, if not for the actual occupation, of the village, and to that end to throw up a small stone fort,

or *sangar*, on the crest of the height immediately above it. 1841. Nov. 22.

According to a good authority[1] high language was used by Shelton to Elphinstone in that council of war, though whether in reference to the general's conduct at large or to the projected operation in particular is not stated. As has already been told, sundry small parties of the British had already been stationed in forts outside the cantonments, thereby weakening the numbers at disposal to man the ramparts, and throwing additional duty upon men who were already overworked. These posts, however, were within musket-shot of the cantonments, whereas the projected redoubt on the Behmaru heights would be about eight hundred yards distant, that is to say, beyond effective range of a field-gun, and would therefore need a fairly strong garrison. The village of Behmaru itself lay on the north-eastern slope; and the upper houses commanded the Mission compound, which was within reach at any rate of the heavier Afghan *jezails*. This fact may not have been without its influence upon Macnaghten; but his chief motive in pressing for this operation was undoubtedly to give the Afghans, from whom he was buying supplies in the village, the excuse that their grain was taken from them by force.

At 2 A.M. of the 23rd Shelton sallied out in dead silence with six companies each of the Fifth and Thirty-seventh Native Infantry, five of the Forty-fourth, one squadron of regular and two of irregular horse, and a single horse-artillery gun; altogether about nine hundred foot and three hundred and fifty cavalry, besides one hundred native sappers. The column made for a gorge which, running north and south, divides the Behmaru ridge into two distinct hills; the gun was dragged with great difficulty up the steep and rugged acclivity; and the whole moved to a knoll at the north-eastern extremity of the more easterly hill, which overhung the village. There was no moon; Nov. 23.

[1] Lady Sale, p. 122.

1841. Nov. 23. but watch-fires were visible in an open space among the buildings. Upon these the gun opened fire with grape, whereupon the enemy fled to the houses and towers, from whence they discharged an answering fire of *jezails*. The British responded with their muskets, and this futile firing in the dark went on till dawn, when parties of the enemy were seen hurrying out of the village across the plain to a distant fort. Shelton then told off two companies of the Thirty-seventh Native Infantry and a few of the Forty-fourth, under Major Swayne, to storm the village. Why Swayne, who belonged to the Fifth Native Infantry and had on a previous occasion showed himself backward in attack, was chosen to lead men of other regiments to this assault, is not clear; but he went to work in his usual fashion, leading his men to a small wicket, which he could not force, instead of to the main entrance. He then put his party under cover when he was himself shot through the neck, and several of his men were likewise shot down.

Before matters could go further, large bodies of men were seen streaming out of the city towards the scene of the conflict, and Shelton, recalling Swayne's detachment, made new dispositions. He had already posted a squadron of horse in the plain to south of the ridge to watch his flank; and he now left three companies of the Thirty-seventh Native Infantry, under Major Kershaw, on the knoll overlooking the village, and moved the rest of his force with his gun southward to the brow of the gorge, where he drew it up in two lines of infantry, with the cavalry in rear, facing south. He seems at the same time to have sent a message to cantonments asking for reinforcements and for another gun. No such message should have been necessary. The Afghans, in passing from Kabul to Behmaru, necessarily crossed the western front of the cantonments; and if Elphinstone had promptly sent out the strongest possible force of all three arms, he could have assailed them in flank, and brought on

a general action under most advantageous conditions. 1841.
It was, in fact, a great chance for righting the entire Nov. 23.
situation; but there seems to have been no one about Elphinstone who could force him to seize it.

The enemy now crowned the western hill of the ridge in masses, to the number (as was reckoned) of ten thousand, and pushed forward their sharpshooters to contend with the skirmishers posted by Shelton to watch the dead ground over the brow of the gorge. Gradually these crept round both of Shelton's flanks, so that he was compelled to double back the flank companies of both his lines, thus forming in each case three sides of a square. By 7 A.M. the pressure upon the skirmishers in front was already severe, and Shelton's single gun alone could retaliate, which it did with great effect, upon the masses of the enemy, until it grew too hot to be served any longer. So the action continued until past nine o'clock, the Afghans taking skilful advantage of every stone and hollow and ravine to pour bullets upon the whole of Shelton's array and to receive none in return. The troops became discouraged. They had been on foot already for ten hours; they had been for some days on half-rations; and there was no water on the hill. Thus they were weary, hungry and thirsty; and some, at any rate, of them had not been in the best of heart when they started. The Fifth Native Infantry seems not to have been a good regiment; and their colonel, Oliver, though a very brave man, was one of the worst croakers in the force. He tried to lead some of his sepoys over the brow of the gorge to keep down the Afghan fire, but not a man would follow him; and it was only when he went down alone, saying that he at least would do his duty, that a bare dozen joined him for very shame. The apathy of their comrades in cantonments may well have contributed to the demoralisation of these men; but, though Shelton asked again and again for reinforcements and for another gun, not a man was sent to him.

1841. Nov. 23. It was not yet ten o'clock when a large body of Afghan cavalry, perhaps fifteen hundred strong,[1] advanced along the plain to south of the heights, and drove Walker's single squadron to take refuge on the hill. They were checked by a few rounds of shrapnel, which did great execution and killed Abdulla Khan, one of their foremost leaders; but the withdrawal of Walker enabled the enemy to throw reinforcements into Behmaru and to threaten Shelton not only on the right flank but in rear. Shortly afterwards a party of Afghan fanatics, Ghazis, crept up to the very brow of the hill, drove back the British skirmishers and planted a flag within thirty yards of Shelton's first line of infantry. Shelton gave the word to fix bayonets and charge; but not a man would move. The officers rushed to the front and flung stones at the Ghazis, who retorted with the same primitive missile; but still neither British nor sepoys would advance. Then a Ghazi rose, waving his sword over his head, and he and his fellows rushed on, drove Shelton's first line before them like sheep, cut down the gunners, who stood nobly by their piece, and captured the gun. The officers of the cavalry rode forward, calling to their men to charge, but not one of their troopers would move. Happily, the second line stood firm, the fugitives were with some difficulty rallied behind it, and then, singularly enough, the Ghazis, in their turn, were smitten with panic and ran back. The news of Abdulla Khan's death spread dismay among all ranks of the Afghans, who retired once more with some precipitation to the western hill, carrying off the limber and horses, but not the gun. The piece was therefore recovered, and the gunners reopened fire while the troops reoccupied their former ground.

To the spectators in cantonments the fight seemed now to be over, and Macnaghten went so far as to

[1] Lady Sale, p. 124, says from 3000 to 4000, and she had had some experience in judging of numbers; but I think it safer to halve her estimate.

urge Elphinstone to pursue the flying Afghans into the city.[1] The general refused, saying that it was a wild scheme and not feasible; and, as the enemy presently attempted unsuccessfully to intercept ammunition and a fresh limber that was on its way to Shelton, it is clear that they did not consider the action over. None the less, even thus late a counter-attack from cantonments—for Shelton's men were too much shaken and exhausted for any such movement—would have decided the day favourably; but Elphinstone sent out not a man. Colin Mackenzie, whom Shelton had taken on to his staff for the day, urged Shelton to retire to cantonments while the Afghans were still inactive; but Shelton refused, as it seems to me, rightly. He had, by his appeal for reinforcements, signified his inability to hold his own, and it was for Elphinstone to recall him if the general wished him to return. Meanwhile the enemy reassembled in even greater numbers upon the southern hill, and, repeating their former tactics, advanced again to the attack. Soon after noon they had made such progress that Shelton ordered Kershaw to move up to his assistance. Kershaw, fully engaged with large bodies of the enemy by the village, in answer suggested rather that the Brigadier should fall back to him as the surest way of securing a retreat. The first line was by this time wavering, and the sergeant in charge of the gun pressed for leave to retire upon Kershaw, which Shelton at last granted. With the retreat of the gun the Ghazis leaped to their feet, and made a rush which broke Shelton's shaken and enfeebled infantry; and all was panic. The men poured down the hill to the cantonments, a mere terrified rabble, with the Afghans in eager chase, and the gun was captured. Poor, decrepit Elphinstone mounted his horse and rode out, vainly trying to restore order; for it seemed as if pursuers and pursued would enter the cantonments together. Two gallant officers with a small body of

1841. Nov. 23.

[1] Lady Sale's *Journal*, p. 127.

1841. Nov. 23. cavalry did something to save the fugitives; a party of native sharpshooters under Captain Trevor did something more, and the fire of some of the Shah's infantry from the Mission compound perhaps still more; but the real cause why Shelton's detachment escaped utter annihilation was that the foremost of the Afghan leaders, Osman Khan, voluntarily halted his followers and led them away.

With this crowning disgrace ended this most disgraceful day. Contemporary writers with one accord throw the blame of it upon Shelton, ascribing all misfortunes to his alleged tactical blunders. Shelton, on his side, spoke disparagingly of the bad spirit of the sepoys which, as he asserted, passed from them into the Forty-fourth. There can be no doubt that both sepoys and Europeans behaved ill; but beyond the fact that Shelton had been openly despondent—which is by no means a thing to be readily condoned—it is unjust to hold him responsible for the disaster. The general deterioration in the tone and discipline of the troops had begun long before his arrival in Afghanistan, and was not due to him. The really salient fact is this—that he was sent out with a weak force to an isolated position where he could be surrounded—was put forward, in fact, as though intended as a bait to lure the enemy into a general action; and that, when he actually was surrounded, no effort was made by his superior, who had plenty of men within less than a mile of the scene of action, to rescue him. To this may be added the one detail that, though the heavier of the Afghan *jezails* were known to outrange the musket, Shelton was provided, contrary to standing orders, with but one gun. If additional proof were needed of the utter apathy and inefficiency which reigned within the cantonments it is to be discovered in the fact that, though ordnance-stores were abundant, the guns on the ramparts ran short of ammunition just at the moment when the Afghans were hunting Shelton's fugitives to the very walls. With such neglect and

mismanagement it was hopeless to expect success in battle. It should seem that the Afghan tactics were well conceived, and skilfully and persistently executed; but Nott, in the place of Elphinstone, would have turned the day's fighting into a great and crushing victory. 1841. Nov. 23.

The events of this day consummated the demoralisation of Elphinstone's force; and the Shah, now thoroughly alarmed, wrote to Macnaghten, through one of the envoy's political subordinates, urging immediate retreat into the Bala Hissar. But the operation of moving all troops and stores from the cantonments in the face of an enemy flushed with triumph was declared both by Elphinstone and Shelton to be impossible, even if it could be pronounced expedient. It now appeared that fuel was so deficient in the citadel that the sepoys were dying of cold;[1] and there was no prospect of obtaining more except by fighting for it. On the 24th, however, a new opening offered itself to Macnaghten. The chief, Osman Khan, who had called his cavalry off from the pursuit on the previous day, wrote to him to recall this good service, and to suggest in a friendly way that the British should quietly evacuate the country. Elphinstone warmly supported the idea of entering into negotiations; and therewith all vigilance seems to have been more than ever relaxed. On the night of the 25th the enemy made an attempt to destroy the bridge over the Kabul river. Shelton had long since urged the construction of a small work to protect it. Sturt now advised that the Rika Bashi fort should be blown up and the garrison transferred to a small fort near the bridge. But nothing was done, though for a retreat the bridge was of vital importance. On the 25th, when the Afghan negotiators came into cantonments, there was a still worse sign of demoralisation. Crowds of Afghans, armed to the teeth, swarmed round the ramparts with friendly gestures, crying out that all was settled; and the men of the Nov. 24. Nov. 25.

[1] Kaye, ii. 102.

1841. Nov. 25. Forty-fourth went out among them unarmed, shaking hands with them, and accepting presents of vegetables without the slightest check from their officers. Yet Afghan treachery had long been proverbial, and it was known that on this very day Mohamed Akbar Khan, a son of Dost Mohamed, had returned to Kabul in triumph with a following of some thousands of men. Where the carcase is, there will the vultures be gathered together; but there is no occasion for the carcase to welcome the vultures before life is extinct.

The terms proposed by the Afghans were so outrageously humiliating that on the 27th they were finally rejected, and on the 28th and 29th the British made some show of resuming hostilities by shelling the village of Behmaru, in order to cover the collection of grain. But the gathering in of supplies became more and more difficult, and the animals were dying fast from sheer starvation. Yet still Macnaghten remained sanguine of the success of his obscure intrigues. He declared that "prospects were brightening," and, when the Commissary adjured him to make up his mind to retreat while there were yet provisions to carry the army to Jalalabad, the envoy answered, "Let us wait two days longer, as something Dec. 1. may turn up."[1] On the 1st of December the enemy made an attack on the citadel of the Bala Hissar, which was easily repulsed with considerable loss to the assailants; but there was no attempt to turn this success to account. On the 5th the Afghans burned, without molestation, the bridge over the Kabul river; and on the 6th they surprised the garrison of Mohamed Sherif's fort—forty men of the Forty-fourth and sixty of the Thirty-seventh Native Infantry—who seem to have been asleep, but at any rate had laid aside arms and accoutrements, and who took to their heels almost without firing a shot. Shelton paraded the fugitives to recapture the fort and so wipe away their disgrace, but after some hours of waiting in the cold they were dismissed.[2]

[1] Kaye, ii. 101-103. [2] Lady Sale's *Journal*, pp. 107-108.

The first snow had fallen on the 26th of November, 1841.
and the weather was growing daily colder. Supplies Dec.
failed in the cantonments and were only replenished by doles, gathered in with risk and difficulty from the Bala Hissar. On the 8th of December Macnaghten wrote officially to Elphinstone asking whether there were any resource now left but negotiation for peaceful retreat, and, having obtained his assent, met a number of tribal chiefs in conference on the 11th. He pro- Dec. 11.
posed that the British should evacuate Afghanistan and every post that they held in it, and return to India not only unmolested but with transport and supplies to be furnished to them by the Afghans; that Dost Mohamed and his fellow exiles should be restored to their own country, Shah Shuja abdicating his throne and remaining at Kabul, or retiring with the British to Ludhiana, as he might prefer; and that no British force should again enter Afghanistan without consent of the Afghan government. The British were to evacuate their cantonments within three days, the chiefs meanwhile sending in supplies for their sustenance. The terms were accepted. Captain Trevor, one of Macnaghten's subordinates, was given over as hostage for Macnaghten's good faith; and the British looked forward to making their first march on the 14th. The Afghan chiefs had other ends in view.

Two days' delay were caused by Shah Shuja's hesitation whether to remain at Kabul, where the Durani chiefs wished to retain him for their own purposes, or to retire to India; but at last he decided upon the latter course. Meanwhile, the chiefs furnished to the cantonments no transport and only scanty supplies of victual, while a rabble of Afghan ruffians plundered and robbed all private traders within a dozen yards of the ramparts, the soldiers having orders not to fire upon them. On the 13th the troops were Dec. 13.
withdrawn from the Bala Hissar, but they had no time to load the grain that they had with them, and there was an ugly scene when, late in the evening, they

1841. at last emerged from the gate; for the Afghan chiefs
Dec. 13. seem to have laid some plot for entering the fortress as soon as the British had left it, and Shah Shuja, having some inkling of this, shut the gate hastily and fired indiscriminately on friend and foe. The troops were kept waiting all night in bitter cold before the chief, Akbar Khan, dared to move them over the plain, though he finally led them into cantonments
Dec. 14. unmolested next morning. On that same day Elphinstone gave orders for the camp-followers to be armed with the spare muskets that he had in store, whereupon the wretched creatures rushed in and helped themselves not only to arms but to anything else that they could lay hands on. All discipline had vanished, thanks, primarily, to the weakness of the Commander-in-chief, and latterly to lack of clothing and lack of fuel, sheer cold and sheer hunger.

The envoy now pressed for the promised transport and supplies. The chiefs retorted by first demanding the evacuation of the forts around the cantonments, which were duly yielded up on the afternoon of the
Dec. 16. 16th. Still the transport and supplies came not; and there was very good reason why they should not. Macnaghten was scattering money in all directions, offering bribes to all parties, after his usual fashion, and fairly inviting them to be dilatory in the hope of obtaining more. On the 18th a heavy fall of snow enabled the chiefs to put further pressure on the envoy. They extorted from him on the 19th an order for the
Dec. 20. evacuation of Ghazni, and on the 20th made a further demand for immediate surrender of the guns and ammunition, with the delivery of Shelton as a hostage into their hands. On this latter day, Macnaghten received for the first time certain intelligence that Maclaren's brigade had been compelled by snow to return to Kandahar; so that the last hope, to which he had clung for so long, was gone. Lieutenant Sturt advised Elphinstone to break off the treaty and march for Jalalabad at once; but, on the contrary, one of the

chiefs was invited on the 22nd to go over the ordnance- 1841.
stores and make a selection from them. On that Dec. 22.
same evening Akbar Khan sent in proposals to Macnaghten that in return for a very large sum he, Akbar Khan, should join the British, rally the Ghilzais to them, seize the person of one of the leading chiefs, and enable the British to remain at Kabul until the spring, when they should return to India comfortably, leaving Shah Shuja still sovereign of Afghanistan, with Akbar Khan for his Prime Minister. The whole scheme was so extravagant that only a desperate man could have been deluded by it, but Macnaghten, worried and harassed to death, eagerly accepted it. On the next Dec. 24.
day he went out with three companions and a very small escort to meet Akbar Khan and others in conference at a spot about six hundred yards from the cantonments. Armed Afghans crowded round them at once. Presently the envoy and all his companions were seized, and Macnaghten was shot down on the spot by Akbar Khan himself and cut to pieces by the fanatics who attended him. Captain Trevor shared his fate; and George Lawrence and Colin Mackenzie were carried off as prisoners. The scene was not distinctly visible from cantonments, though one officer was certain that he had seen Macnaghten fall, and the Afghans hacking at him. In any case, not a shot was fired, and not a man was even marched to the spot. There is no more ignoble passage in the history of the army.

On the 24th the chiefs held a discussion with their captives Lawrence and Mackenzie, and their hostages, Captain Connolly and another political officer; as the result of which the treaty was sent back to Elphinstone, with three additional clauses to the effect that the British should give up all their treasure, and all their guns but six, and that married men with their wives and families should be substituted for the existing hostages. It was also explained that Macnaghten had met his death because he had treacherously violated the treaty, which was unfortunately true. Unable

1841. to contemplate anything but peaceful withdrawal,
Dec. 24. Elphinstone begged Eldred Pottinger to assume the duties of Macnaghten. Pottinger in vain tried to persuade the military leaders either to hold out in Kabul or to retreat. Messages had come in from Peshawar that reinforcements were arriving from India, and that Sale had gained a great success at Jalalabad; but Elphinstone would hear of nothing but negotiation. The terms were accepted, with some amendment in the matter of hostages. The sick and wounded were moved to the Bala Hissar, and every preparation was made for the march. But the chiefs had the game in their hands, and delayed the departure of the force from day to day, serving out only small quantities of
1842. supplies. The weather grew more and more severe.
Jan. Snow lay thick on the ground. Fuel was so scarce that officers burned their furniture to cook their meals. At sunrise on the 3rd of January 1842 the thermometer was below zero of Fahrenheit; and even in an officer's quarters, with a blazing fire, rose to only eight degrees above freezing-point at noon. The Afghans judged that the time was come. They furnished a certain number of transport-animals, and informed Elphinstone that they would be ready on the 6th to escort him on his march from Kabul.

The force under his command is generally reckoned at four thousand five hundred fighting men,[1] of which

[1] This is the estimate both of Eyre and of Lady Sale. Eyre's details are :

1 troop of Horse-artillery	90 men
H.M. 44th	600 „
5th Bengal Light Cavalry (2 sq.)	260 „
5th Shah's irregular horse	500 „
Other irregular cavalry	210 „
5th Bengal N.I.	700 „
37th „	600 „
54th „	650 „
Shah's troops	870 „
Sappers and Miners	20 „
	4500 „

barely seven hundred were Europeans, about two thousand were regular Bengal infantry, two hundred and fifty Bengal cavalry, and the remainder were irregular horse and Shah Shuja's troops of both arms. Added to these were from twelve to fifteen thousand followers, besides women and children, in themselves a serious, if not fatal, encumbrance. The order of march was as follows. The Forty-fourth, Sappers and Miners, a squadron of irregular horse and three mountain-guns, composed the advanced guard, under Brigadier-general Anquetil. Then followed the main column, under Shelton, consisting of the European ladies with their escort, the invalids and sick, two horse-artillery guns, the Fifth Shah's Irregular Horse, the Thirty-seventh Native Infantry with the treasure, and the Fifth Native Infantry with the baggage. The rear-guard, under Colonel Chambers, was made up of a battalion of the Shah's infantry, two squadrons of the Fifth Light Cavalry and four horse-artillery guns. 1842 Jan. 6.

The conditions of the retreat were such that the only chance of extricating the force was to hustle it ruthlessly on, after the fashion of Soult and Massena in Portugal, without any real halt until it was clear of the Khurd Kabul pass, a distance of nineteen miles, and had reached Tezin, perhaps ten miles further on, where there would be no snow. To this end it was essential to use as many routes, to carry as little baggage and to make as early a start as possible. Shah Shuja had finally decided to stay at Kabul, so that one useless encumbrance at least was out of the way. Now there are two passes which offer alternative routes to the Khurd Kabul; the Lataband, which runs on due east from Butkhak, and the Guldara, which turns eastward about six miles north of Kabul. Troops moving by the latter of these could have prevented the enemy

I suspect these figures to be somewhat exaggerated. Sepoy battalions were always weak. The casualties since the 2nd of November had been considerable in action, and sickness had been very prevalent. Elphinstone stated his sick and wounded at from 600 to 700.

1842. Jan. 6. from occupying the heights commanding the Khurd Kabul pass and thus have facilitated the passage of the main column through it, while the Lataband could have been used by some of the followers. No effort, however, was made to utilise either of these lateral passes. As to baggage, Shelton had been urgent that all that was not absolutely necessary should be left behind, both to free the column from impediments and to tempt the Afghans to remain behind and plunder. Elphinstone spoke to the commanding officers, but none would consent to abandon their property, and he did not convert his recommendation into an order, as he should have done. It was not merely the possessions of the officers but their lives, and the lives of thousands of soldiers and followers, that were at stake. Lastly, instead of moving off at daylight, the troops were not roused until seven in the morning, preparatory to marching off at nine.

At that hour the advance guard left the cantonment through a cut that had been made in the eastern rampart, and traversed the few hundred yards to the Kabul river, where it came to a halt. Materials had been sent down for the construction of a temporary bridge, but this was not yet ready; and the column remained stationary on the bank in biting cold for more than an hour, though the men were bound to get their feet wet in the snow and could easily have forded the water. Meanwhile, a message came from one of the chiefs that the march must be delayed, as his escort for the army was not yet ready; but matters had gone too far, and for once the behest was not obeyed. The Afghans also began swarming out of Behmaru, and, noticing that the Mission compound had been evacuated, forced their way into it and began the delightful work of pillage and destruction. The battalion stationed in the Mission compound was one of the Shah's, which had been told off as part of the rear-guard and need not therefore have left its post for hours; but it is impossible to divine what orders,

if any, it may have received, or how far it may have thought fit to obey them. 1842. Jan. 6.

Not until noon was the advanced guard clear of the bridge, leaving room for the main body to move in turn. Within a hundred and fifty yards of the ramparts the camels were in difficulties, descending and ascending the slippery banks to the bridge over the canal. There were two thousand of them, weak and half-starved, with a mob of followers swarming in utter confusion about them. The bridge over the river presently broke down, increasing the disorder, and the main column became a seething mass of men and animals which no efforts nor struggles could disentangle. The rear-guard, too weak to hold the cantonments, took up for its own safety a position outside them, and the Afghans burst in, exulting, to plunder and to burn. Every building was kindled, which at least gave light and some warmth as the day closed down; but meanwhile some of the Afghans lined the ramparts and opened fire upon the hapless rear-guard. Two horse-artillery guns had to be spiked and abandoned, and an officer and fifty native troopers were killed outright before it could move off. Huge piles of the precious baggage of the officers were abandoned on the spot, and much of the rest was plundered before it had travelled far. Not until 2 A.M. Jan. 7. of the 7th did the remnant of the rear-guard reach Elphinstone's bivouac, a bare five miles from Kabul.

The whole length of those five miles was lined with camp-followers and sepoys, worn out with long starvation and overwork, who had sat down in the snow to die. The bivouac itself was a mere chaos of soldiers, followers, camels, bullocks, horses and baggage. There was no food for man or beast, no fuel, no shelter, nothing but the bitter invisible cloak of the frost above and around, and the snow underfoot. At daylight many, including one European officer, were found frozen to death; the Shah's infantry and sappers had vanished—who shall blame them?—and half of

1842. Jan. 7. the sepoys, unfit for further work, and unable to hold their arms, had joined the mob of followers, who at the first streak of dawn struggled ahead, eager to return to India. No bugle was sounded; no order was given; but the advanced guard of sepoys moved off about 7.30, forcing their way through the mob, as best they could, to gain the front. Armed Afghans, both horse and foot, hung about the flanks of the column, but for some time made no attack, and were supposed to be the escort furnished by the chiefs. Then suddenly they fell upon the rear-guard, now formed chiefly of the Forty-fourth, and clung to them closely despite of the fire of the mountain-guns. In order to avoid a block on the road these three pieces fetched a short compass apart without an escort, and were captured at once by a party of Afghans. Some of the Forty-fourth charged and recaptured them, but the drivers had fled, and it was necessary to spike and abandon two of them. Anquetil sent forward a message to ask for reinforcements from the front, but these were unable to make their way through the press; and the Afghans, charging into the midst of what was left of the baggage-column, carried off much of the reserve of ammunition. And all the while men were dropping fast from wounds and weakness and cold, and animals as fast as the men. Two more horse-artillery guns were spiked and abandoned, the horses being powerless to drag them through the snow; and it seems that there was actually danger lest the column should be cut in twain through the centre and the whole of the rear should be destroyed.

On reaching Butkhak at 1 P.M., therefore, Elphinstone gave the order to halt, and sent back all the troops that could be spared, together with the two remaining guns, to extricate the rear-guard. The enemy had gathered by this time in great strength in the rear, and were threatening an attack also on the right flank, which was parried by Shelton. Now, however, Mohamed Akbar Khan was found and

approached by a political officer; and the chief declared that the force must halt at Butkhak until the following morning, and give hostages as a pledge not to advance beyond Tezin, until Sale, in compliance with an order sent to him after the signing of the treaty, should have evacuated Jalalabad. In return he undertook to supply food, forage and fuel for the troops. Elphinstone accepted the terms; the firing ceased; the rear shambled up in a disorderly mass; and the force settled down to another night of confusion, hunger, cold and misery. It had marched no greater distance than five miles, making ten miles in two days; and it should seem that only by thus restricting its progress could Mohamed Akbar Khan hope to bar its way at the further end of the pass. 1842. Jan. 7.

Dawn of the 8th of January saw the fighting force reduced to a few hundred exhausted men. Many had perished outright; those that were alive were so much stiffened by cold that they could hardly move, and the troopers of the cavalry could not climb into their saddles without help. Very early the Afghans began to fire into the bivouac, but ran away directly when they saw the Forty-fourth advance to attack; and the column began to thread the six miles of defile that bears the name of the Khurd Kabul. At the narrowest point fire was opened on the advanced guard, with which several English ladies were riding, and they hurried their horses forward in front of all. Thereupon, the crowd behind them, on coming under fire, likewise ran forward in panic, abandoning everything. The rear-guard, consisting of the Thirty-seventh Native Infantry and the Forty-fourth, was heavily engaged from the first, but the sepoys were so utterly paralysed with the cold that they would make no effort to fight, and drifted slowly forward, allowing the Afghans to take from them their muskets and even their clothes. All the work, therefore, fell upon the Forty-fourth, who suffered heavily, but stood firm until their ammunition was nearly exhausted, and Jan. 8.

1842. then forged their way forward to a position where
Jan. 8. Elphinstone was awaiting them with such few men as he could collect. One gun was abandoned in the pass, and the other was only brought into bivouac by the hands of the men, the horses being unable to drag it through the snow. Many officers and men fell honourably on this day; and it was reckoned that five hundred soldiers and five times that number of followers perished in the Khurd Kabul pass. The night was worse than the two previous nights, for the snow fell from sunset until dawn, and the bivouac lay at an elevation of over seven thousand feet. The wounded lay or staggered about moaning, until the frost, cruelly merciful, put them slowly to their last sleep. Those that woke on the morning of the 9th marvelled to find that they were yet alive.

Jan. 9. With the first light most of the troops and all the camp-followers moved off without orders, but were presently stopped by Elphinstone's command. Mohamed Akbar had once again come forward, declaring that he would endeavour to furnish victuals, but meanwhile strongly recommending a halt until he could make arrangements for escorting the column with security. He also definitely engaged himself to take charge of the European ladies, their husbands and families, and of the wounded officers, and to bring them down under due protection a day's march in rear of the army. Elphinstone and every soldier in the camp were by this time profoundly distrustful of all Afghan promises, but, yielding to the advice of the political officer, who urged that a mark of confidence in Mohamed Akbar would be for the good of the whole force, he gave his consent. The ladies were hurried off with such haste that only two of the wounded officers had time to join them; and the rest of the force remained halted in the snow. The Shah's cavalry thereupon began to desert in whole bodies, and in company with large parties of Afghan horse remained hovering about the camp. The effective fighting-men were then paraded

and were found to number from seven to eight hundred in all, two hundred and fifty of the Forty-fourth, rather over four hundred sepoys and troopers of the Bengal army, and about one hundred irregulars. Throughout the day the wretched mob of starving, shivering men waited in vain for the fuel and the food that never came; and night closed down upon them in misery and despair. 1842. Jan. 9

At daybreak the survivors once again struggled promiscuously to the front, the Europeans and a handful of troopers of the Fifth Native Cavalry being the only efficient men left. These appear to have maintained their discipline, and, being formed into an advanced guard, pushed their way through the staggering rabble ahead of them and marched on unopposed for a couple of miles until they reached a gorge, the heights of which upon one side were strongly occupied by the enemy. These at once opened fire, but the advanced guard forced their way through them, though with heavy loss, and halted five miles beyond to allow the rear to come up. But the helpless creatures behind them could offer no resistance, and the Afghans, after shooting them down for a time, rushed upon them with their knives and cut them down like sheep. The last remnants of the sepoys were here destroyed, and the treasure and what remained of the baggage were taken. Terrified fugitives from the rear came up from time to time, and the followers still formed a considerable body; but the fighting force was reduced to about three hundred and fifty men, two-thirds of them Europeans of the Forty-fourth and artillery, with a single twelve-pounder howitzer. Jan. 10.

Once again Mohamed Akbar presented himself, professed that he had been unable to restrain the Ghilzais from attacking, and proposed that the fighting-men should lay down their arms and entrust themselves to be led under his protection to Jalalabad, leaving the followers to their fate. Elphinstone refused. The followers and the wounded were sent ahead, and the

1842. Jan. 10. march was resumed down the steep descent of the Haft Kotal, Shelton with a small party of Europeans taking charge of the rear. At the foot of the hill was a narrow defile, and at the entrance to this the Afghans swooped down upon the helpless men at the head of the column and made an end of them. The fighting soldiers then entered the gorge. For the whole three miles of its length the heights were lined with the enemy's sharp-shooters, who threw their weight chiefly upon the rear-guard. These were but a handful; their ammunition was scanty; the odds against them were terrific; but they had a leader in Shelton, who, with fiery energy and heedless courage, flew from group to group of his men, breathing his own gallantry into them, and heartening them against all odds, till at length, at 4 P.M., he brought his rear-guard proudly into the camping ground of the valley of Tezin. It was a great feat of arms, a great triumph of moral force, and much may be forgiven to Shelton for his supreme effort on this day.

There was no snow on the ground at Tezin, but the situation was not the less desperate. Twelve thousand soldiers and followers had been lost since the force had left Kabul, and fifteen European officers had fallen upon this day alone; but there still remained followers enough to imperil every movement. Elphinstone again sent an emissary to Mohamed Akbar in the faint hope of obtaining fair terms; but the only answer was a repetition of the proposal that the troops should surrender their arms, which was once more rejected. It was then resolved to make a night march to Jagdalak, a distance of twenty-two miles, in order, if possible, to traverse the dangerous pass of that name before the enemy could occupy it in strength. Similar energy at the outset might have saved a great part of the troops, and it is reasonable to suppose that this effort was due to Shelton. At 7 P.M. the column moved off, spiking and abandoning its last gun, and for seven miles pursued its way unmolested, the main body of

the Forty-fourth leading the way, with a small party under Shelton bringing up the rear. Then a few shots were fired at the tail of the column, and the camp-followers, still from two to three thousand in number, rushed headlong to the front and became entangled with the advanced guard. Then a shot or two was fired at the front, and the senseless mob ran back again; and so they continued surging backward and forward, blocking up the road so that Shelton's party could hardly move on and the advanced guard could not march back to help it. However, even so the foremost of the Forty-fourth had traversed another six miles by dawn of the 11th, when they halted to allow the rear to close up. With the coming of the light the fighting became more serious, and from the halting-place to Jagdalak, a distance of nine or ten miles, the conflict was incessant, and the *jezails* of the Afghans very destructive. About 3 P.M. the advanced guard reached Jagdalak and took up a position behind some ruined walls on a height by the roadside. The officers extended themselves in line to make the front the more imposing; and the whole of the little body stood and cheered Shelton, as with indomitable courage and superhuman energy he thrust back the hordes of his pursuers, and foot by foot fought his way forward to his comrades.

1842. Jan. 10. Jan. 11.

Only a small remnant, perhaps two hundred men, were now left, and one and all were exhausted by hunger, fatigue and, even worse, by thirst. A stream ran near the foot of the hills, but to approach it was certain death. Even the chosen position was exposed to fire from three sides, the party being too weak to dislodge the enemy permanently from the heights above it. In despair the men swallowed the snow which lay on the ground, which of course aggravated rather than relieved their sufferings; and the only alleviation was the raw flesh of three bullocks, which had somehow been saved and were now slaughtered. This was served out, always under dropping fire from long range, and was ravenously swallowed. Meanwhile,

1842. about 3.30 P.M., a message had come from Mohamed
Jan. 11. Akbar, requesting the presence of Captain Skinner, who, not abandoning hope, at once obeyed the summons, though manifestly at the risk of his life. Trusting that there would be a truce at least until his return, the weary troops threw themselves down to rest, but only to draw down on themselves volley after volley from the surrounding hills. Captain Bygrave, Paymaster to the force, thereupon sallied out with fifteen men of the Forty-fourth and, charging up the slope, drove the Afghans into flight. For some time this little band held the ground that they had gained, until some of Mohamed Akbar's people caused the fire to cease, and the survivors of the column were left in comparative repose. At 5 P.M. Skinner returned, requiring Elphinstone's immediate presence at a conference, and the delivery of Shelton and another officer as hostages for Sale's evacuation of Jalalabad. Elphinstone had no choice, as he conceived, but to comply; but the troops, though little disturbed during the night, saw the departure of Shelton with despair.

Jan. 12. At 9 A.M. on the 12th the conference was held, and hours were spent in vain endeavours to conciliate the chiefs. Elphinstone begged to be sent back to his men, dwelling on the dishonour to himself of being denied the right of dying with them, but in vain. Mohamed Akbar was evidently bent on securing valuable hostages for the safety of Dost Mohamed and his fellow exiles. Meanwhile the Afghans crowned the heights as on the previous day, and kept up a steady, galling fire from dawn until dark. Very early Skinner, who had ridden out to meet an expected messenger from Mohamed Akbar, was brought in, mortally wounded by a skulking Ghilzai; and his fate confirmed the troops in their distrust of Afghan treachery. None the less, little handfuls of the Forty-fourth, under various officers, sallied out time after time and drove the enemy off, though they were too weak in numbers to hold them permanently at a distance.

Night at length closed down; and at 7 P.M., despairing of Elphinstone's return, Anquetil, who was in command, decided to push on at all risks for Jalalabad. The sick and wounded were inevitably abandoned to their fate. 1842. Jan. 11.

After traversing about a mile and a half, with little molestation, the column entered the Jagdalak pass, and the Ghilzais, now on the alert, at once closed in upon its rear. Still the troops struggled on through the three miles of the narrow defile until, near the summit, they came upon two strong barriers, or abatis, formed of branches of prickly oak, which blocked the whole breadth of the way. The advanced guard was checked while trying to force a way through these obstacles; the rear surged up to it; and the Afghans, after pouring volley after volley upon the mass, rushed in with their long knives to indiscriminate slaughter. Anquetil and eleven more officers fell in this struggle; but a single officer and a few men of the Forty-fourth forced their way through both barriers and halted on the other side to allow stragglers to come up. The little body thus formed then gave three cheers and moved on in good order through the more open country beyond the pass. Other officers, with or without a small following of men, came after them; and about a dozen, who were pretty well mounted, pushed ahead with such of the cavalry as was left, intent upon reaching Jalalabad. For seven miles more the remnant of the force pursued its way over pebbly paths, up and down steep ravines till, on descending the very steep declivity to the Surkhab river, they found the bridge held by the enemy. With great difficulty, for the stream was a roaring torrent, they forced a passage at a ford below the bridge, at the cost of an officer and several men of the Forty-fourth killed, and pursued their way through the darkness to Gandamak. There were now remaining about twenty officers, of whom Major Griffiths was the senior, from fifty to seventy of the Forty-fourth, about half of them

1842. armed, half-a-dozen artillerymen, four or five sepoys
Jan. 12 and three hundred followers. At Gandamak daylight revealed the weakness of their numbers, and the enemy closed in upon them from all sides. They therefore left the road and took up a position on a height to defend themselves to the last.

Once again an attempt was made to parley with the enemy, and Griffiths actually descended the hill to confer with a chief. Several Afghans approached the British position in a friendly way, but, attempting to snatch their arms from the men, were driven off with the bayonet. The enemy then posted themselves on an adjacent hill and picked off officer after officer and man after man with unerring aim. Again and again parties rushed up to end the work with the knife and again and again they were driven back, until at last, with no ammunition left, and hardly a man unhurt, the little party was overwhelmed and exterminated. Captain Souter of the Forty-fourth, who was wounded, and a few privates alone were spared, as also were Major Griffiths and his interpreter, who had been led off to a neighbouring fort. Of the few officers who had ridden forward, six reached Fatehabad, the remainder having perished by the way. At Fatehabad the six waited, poor starving creatures, and ate bread which was brought to them by the peasants, thus giving time to the inhabitants to arm themselves and attack them. Two were killed on the spot, three more were overtaken and slain, and one only, Dr. Brydon, rode, desperately wounded, into Jalalabad. Of the two colours of the Forty-fourth one was lost on the body of a quartermaster-sergeant, who had wound it round his waist and had afterwards fallen, and the other, likewise girt about the waist of Captain Souter, was thus saved. Excepting Brydon and rather more than eighty officers and men, who had at different times passed into captivity of the Afghans, the force at Kabul had been annihilated.

There is no need to dwell upon the long chain of

follies and imbecilities which brought about this final catastrophe; but it is necessary to emphasise the fact that the retreat, even though delayed, as it was delayed, until the snow was deep on the ground and the cold was intense, need not have been so disastrous, if it had been undertaken as a serious military operation. Apart from the feebleness of the supreme command, two causes mainly contributed to wreck it, namely, the vast number of followers and Elphinstone's unwillingness to go counter to the agreement with the Afghans. The chiefs pleaded that they were unable to restrain their people from attack, and this is very likely true, though they may not greatly have regretted their lack of authority in this matter. But a child could have seen from the first that the chiefs were merely playing with the British general, and he would have been fully justified in sweeping the treaty aside and acting as if the Afghans were open enemies. It is a grave reflection upon Cotton, as well as upon Elphinstone, and upon their staffs that no one seems to have taken the trouble to find out anything about the lateral defiles which supplement the main pass between Kabul and Jalalabad. Much congestion might have been saved if these lateral passes had been utilised, and thereby rapid movement, rapid even to ruthlessness, which is of the essence of such retreats, might have been accomplished. The sepoys, paralysed as they were by cold, might no doubt have perished in great numbers, but the sense of quick progress towards India would have heartened them to make an effort. The followers, no doubt, would have dropped down by thousands, but even they would have been encouraged to extreme exertion. As to the Europeans, though the Forty-fourth did not always shine in the actions around Kabul, yet from the moment of leaving Tezin, when the retreat assumed a really military character, the battalion recovered and behaved itself nobly. A regiment which has been reduced through casualties to a tenth of its strength, and struggles on

1842. Jan.

1842. Jan. to the last as a formed body, as did the Forty-fourth after forcing the barricades at Jagdalak, cannot be said to lack discipline or spirit. It seems to me beyond question that though his losses would doubtless have been very heavy, Elphinstone, with proper management and due exertion, could have brought certainly half, and perhaps more, of his fighting force into Jalalabad, and punished the Afghans severely in the process. The troops were not fairly treated by their commander. When, presumably at Shelton's instigation, he, so to speak, gave them their heads, on the 10th of January, they responded at once.

But it is idle to heap reproaches upon one whose misfortune it was to be a dying man and to resign his command too late. Fate spared poor Elphinstone nothing. Already worn out by disease, his pain and discomfort were increased by a wound received on the retreat; but even his bodily sufferings were as naught to his mental anguish over his sacrifice of his army. He lingered in captivity until the 23rd of April, when dysentery at last delivered him from his misery. It can only be said that he never attempted to blame any one but himself for the misfortunes that had come through his fault. Shelton, after his release, was brought to a court-martial, less, to judge from the charges, because there was any idea of saddling the blame for the disaster upon him, than because it seemed advisable, according to the practice of the Navy, to bring someone to trial for what was the equivalent of the loss of a small squadron of ships. Though hearsay evidence was, most irregularly, admitted against him, he was acquitted, and he remained in command of the Forty-fourth. It was characteristic of his temper that, during his captivity, he was the one individual, male or female, who was not softened by the mental and bodily distress of Elphinstone; that he quarrelled with every one of his fellow prisoners except Colin Mackenzie, and that he gravely reproached even him for going before him in a general rush down the stairs when the house in

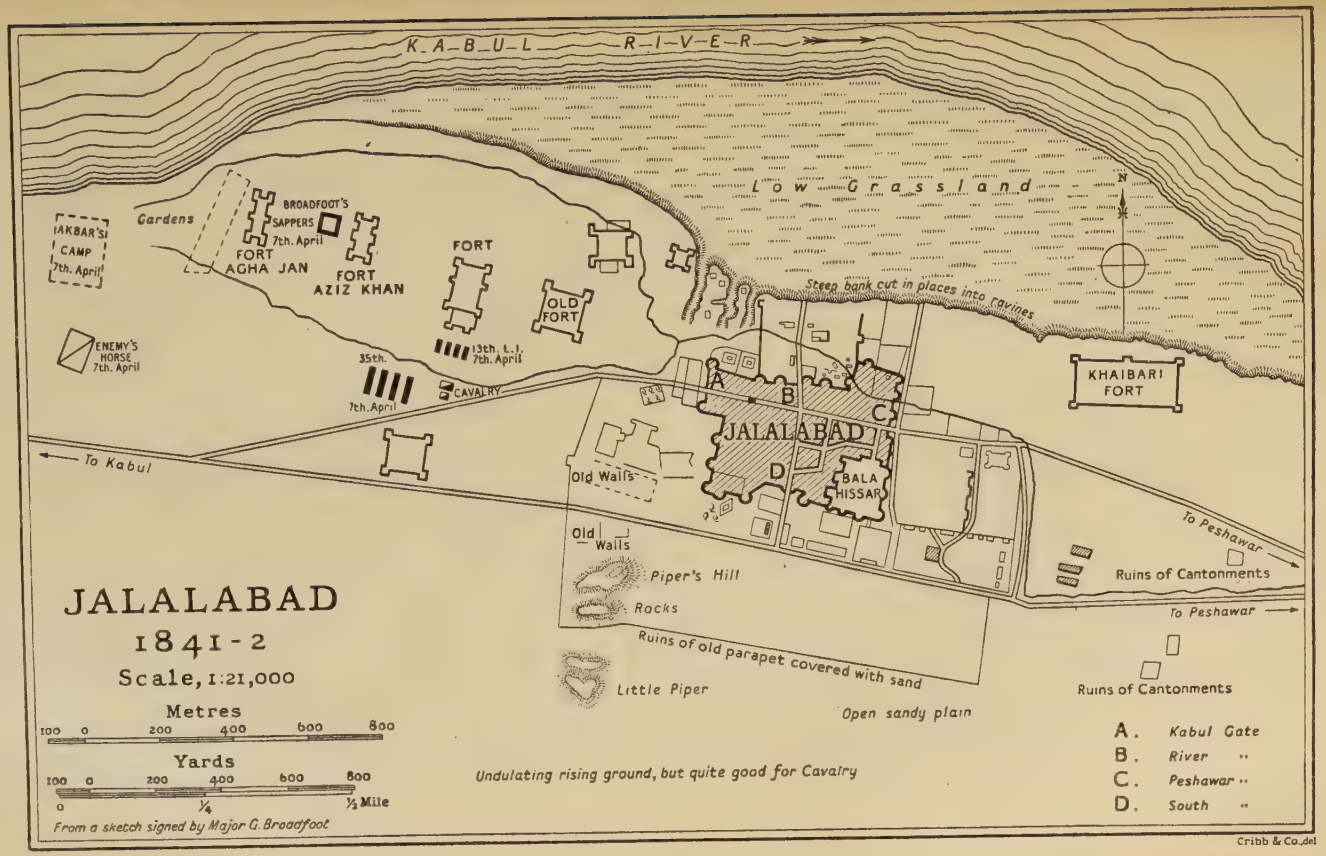
which they were living was shaken about their ears by an earthquake.[1] He met his end through a fall from his horse in a barrack-yard in Dublin in 1845; and it is said that thereupon the regiment turned out and gave three cheers. Yet the brightest figure in the retreat from Kabul is that of this little cantankerous man, with his right sleeve empty, ever at the point of greatest danger, watching every movement with untiring vigilance, securing every point of vantage, husbanding the strength of every man, inspiring every soul of the rear-guard with his own calm heroism, and foiling his fierce enemy with invincible energy and inexhaustible persistence. To so gallant a spirit surely much may be forgiven.

[1] Mackenzie, *Storms and Sunshine of a Soldier's Life*, pp. 284-285.

CHAPTER XXIX

1841. Nov. It is now time to return to Sale, who, with his brigade, had reached Jalalabad on the 12th of November. The town lies on the south side of the Kabul river, and consisted then of an irregular quadrilateral enclosed within earthen walls, with thirty-two semi-circular bastions, and a citadel at the south-eastern angle, the entire perimeter being rather over two thousand yards. The defences were in a ruinous condition, and were closely surrounded on all sides by houses, gardens, enclosures, crumbling forts and old walls, which offered excellent cover to an enemy at close range. The officers appointed by Sale to inspect the works upon his arrival reported unanimously that they were not defensible against a vigorous assault; but after some consultation it was decided to hold the town and repair the defences. Sale had with him only two days' supplies, but, as the whole population had fled, a few hours' search sufficed to discover provisions enough for several days, which relieved one great anxiety. More serious was the dearth of ammunition, the supply of which amounted to but one hundred and twenty rounds to each musket; but of this also enough was found in a mosque outside the town to furnish a small reserve.

At dawn of the 13th the Afghans swarmed round the south side and south-western angle and began firing at the sentries. The walls having no parapets, shelter was improvised for the sentinels by means of camel-saddles, and not until dusk did the enemy creep near enough to inflict a few casualties. Accordingly,



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at dawn of the 14th, Sale made a sortie with about seven hundred infantry, all the cavalry and two guns, under Colonel Monteith, who attacked the Afghans, about six thousand strong, on the hills opposite to the south-western angle and dispersed them with little difficulty, the enemy's casualties being about two hundred killed. This cleared the valley of the enemy for the present. More food and forage were secured in the outlying forts; the villagers daily brought in supplies; Macgregor succeeded in obtaining yet more victuals from the neighbouring chiefs; and altogether the danger of famine ceased to be pressing. It was a full week before the enemy showed again any aggressive spirit, and then they confined themselves to cutting off unwary grass-cutters and followers. This period was turned to full account in strengthening the defences. 1841. Nov.

On the 27th the enemy began to assemble again about a fort some two miles to west of Jalalabad; the villagers ceased to bring in supplies, and it was evident that the attack was about to be renewed. On the 1st of December the Afghans opened a heavy fire on the west side of the place, and Sale on that day made another sally and dispersed them with heavy loss, capturing also large quantities of food and fodder. Once again the villagers flocked into the town to sell flour, grain and vegetables, and the garrison was left practically unmolested for the next six weeks. During this time authentic intelligence reached Sale on the 17th of December of the treaty made by Macnaghten, and on the 2nd of January of Macnaghten's murder; and on the 9th there arrived Elphinstone's order, sent in compliance with the treaty, for Sale to evacuate Jalalabad and retire to Peshawar. Sale decided that it would not be right to act upon such a document, and resolved to stand fast until further orders; a resolution which was not weakened by the arrival, on the 12th, of Dr. Brydon, giving by his mere presence the tidings of the destruction of the force at Kabul. But none the Dec. 1842. Jan.

1842. Jan. less Sale's nerve was evidently shaken, and unduly shaken. There was no difficulty about sending messages to and from Peshawar; and, though his ammunition was somewhat scanty, he could perfectly well have fought his way back to Peshawar, and that with no great difficulty. Yet, having shut himself up in Jalalabad, he had no idea except to call for all the forces of the Empire to come and extricate him.

By good fortune the agent on the north-western frontier, Mr. George Clerk, was a man of ability and energy, as also of great influence with the Sikhs. Having received information of the insurrection at Kabul, of the retreat of Sale to Jalalabad, and of the repeated attacks, successful and otherwise, upon the posts in the Khyber pass, he urged the Commander-in-chief, who was travelling through the north-west

1841. Nov. provinces, to hasten reinforcements to Peshawar. By the 27th of November four native regiments, with small detachments of cavalry and sappers, had crossed the Sutlej, the whole, numbering some forty-five hundred men, being under the command of Brigadier-general Wild. Simultaneously Clerk pressed the Sikhs also to strengthen their troops in Peshawar, and to give all possible help with men and guns to Captain Mackeson, the political agent at that place. Sir Jasper Nicolls, the Commander-in-chief, authorised the advance of Wild to the relief of Sale, only on the condition that in Wild's judgement the operation could be executed with three of his four battalions, the other being employed in maintaining his communications with Peshawar.

By the end of the year Wild had reached his destination with the whole of his force, and there found a sea of troubles. The Sikh troops were mutinous, unwilling, and more than unwilling, to co-operate with the British, most of all in the Khyber pass, and resolute to prevent the loan of any of their artillery to their allies. The British sepoys were infected by the example of their insubordination, and unfortunately

found some pretext for it. The commander of the small detachment of native gunners had, without authority, paid them the additional allowance for service beyond the Indus. The infantry claimed the same privilege, and on being refused displayed a disobedient spirit, which was not lessened even by the promise that they should receive their due later. Then Wild's camel-drivers refused to move beyond Peshawar. Then the Sikh troops, on receiving the order to advance to Jamrud, mutinously declined to stir. All these causes, added to shortage of ammunition, dearth of cavalry and lack of guns, led to delay; and the sepoys, who at first had been eager to march to the help of Sale, exchanged their former ardour for coolness, and began to share the terrors of the Sikhs and their taste for declining to obey all unwelcome orders.[1] 1841. Dec.

However, Macgregor at Jalalabad pressed Wild to advance immediately to the relief of Sale; and most unfortunately the political agents, Mackeson and Henry Lawrence, joined their voices to Macgregor's. The danger in Afghanistan being by this time better apprehended in India, though the full truth was not yet known, a second brigade, under General McCaskill, had been ordered to march on Peshawar, and had crossed the Sutlej on the 4th of January. Wild, being satisfied that Sale was in no immediate danger, was rightly anxious to await this reinforcement before moving, but he allowed himself to be overruled by Mackeson and Lawrence. He had some excuse, for the post of Ali Masjid, which Mackeson's brother had maintained with great gallantry and resolution at the head of a weak garrison of Afghans, could not hold out much longer, and Mackeson begged to lead a column of two battalions of sepoys to its relief. Exaggerating the importance of Ali Masjid, and being, not without reason, apprehensive of the effect of its fall upon Sale, Wild consented; and it was arranged 1842.

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 2 of 1842, Mackeson to Clerk, Jan. 8, 12, 1842.

1842. Jan. that Mackeson should advance with two battalions, followed by the Sikhs, if they would consent to do so, or if not, by the two remaining battalions. Thanks to a bribe of a lakh and a half of rupees, the Sikhs had been persuaded to lend a couple of guns and a certain number of troops; but they declined to move in support of Mackeson, who accordingly advanced without them. Marching on the night of the 15th, Mackeson with great skill and daring outwitted the Afghans, and reached Ali Masjid unmolested with his troops. But a convoy of three hundred bullocks, laden with provisions to revictual the post, went astray, and only sixty of the animals reached their destination. This may have been due to carelessness, but is more probably to be ascribed to sheer cowardice on the part of the drivers, and to the sympathy which was extended to it by their escort of sepoys. Mackeson was therefore fain to put his force upon half-rations, and await the arrival of Wild to enable him to proceed to Jalalabad.

Wild, however, had his own difficulties. The Sikhs in his camp mutinied on the night of the 16th, and some time was lost before further preparations could be made. Even then men and officers worked reluctantly, and the camel-drivers deserted by scores, insomuch that, though Wild started on the night of the 18th, one quarter of the supplies which he was to take with him were still unloaded at daylight of the

Jan. 19. 19th, and the rear-guard did not move until 10 A.M. At the mouth of the pass the Afridis, seemingly in no great force, opened fire. The sepoys wasted much ammunition in shooting at the rocks; and presently the whole turned round and without orders marched back to Peshawar, leaving one gun abandoned on the ground. They were stopped, not without difficulty, both men and officers declaring it to be impossible to escort a convoy to Ali Masjid. Wild summoned the officers and harangued them; and early in the morning of the 20th the sepoys again moved out towards the

pass, only to give way once more with shameful and scandalous readiness. Wild himself was wounded and disabled early in the action; but the casualties of the entire force did not amount to forty; and the attempt failed chiefly because neither officers nor men would put their hearts into their work. Mackeson, after lingering at Ali Masjid until the 25th, was obliged to fight his way back to Peshawar unaided, and succeeded only at the cost of heavy loss.[1] 1842. Jan. 20.

The whole of these proceedings were foolish and unnecessary, and the Supreme Government rightly censured Mackeson and Lawrence for urging operations upon Wild, the inception and execution of which should have been left wholly to the military commander. Fortunately, this was the last interference of the political element with purely military matters, though it narrowly failed of being the most disastrous. The design of dividing Wild's force had been communicated to Sale at Jalalabad; where Broadfoot, divining at once that it must mean failure, had warned Sale, on the 13th, when the destruction of the Kabul force became known, that, unless he meant to defend Jalalabad to the last extremity, he must retreat to Peshawar at once. Sale decided to stand fast, and therewith, despite of Broadfoot's urgent remonstrances, surrendered, or abandoned, the bulk of his transport-animals to the enemy.[2] When, however, the news of Wild's defeat came in, Sale held a council of war, the transactions of which are the most astonishing, and perhaps the most disgraceful, recorded in the annals of the Army.

At the instance, apparently, of Macgregor the political agent, the entire body of the council, with the

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 3 of 1842, Henry Lawrence to Clerk, Jan. 19; to Mackeson, Jan. 22; vol. 4 of 1842, Mackeson to Indian government, Jan. 27; Memo of Henry Lawrence, Feb. 1, 1842.

[2] This transaction is exceedingly obscure; but it is twice mentioned by Broadfoot and I have no doubt that it took place, probably because Sale shrank from the risk—very slight—of losses in obtaining forage for the beasts.

1842. Jan. exception of Captain Backhouse of the artillery and Broadfoot, the acting engineer, declared for treating with the Afghan chiefs for the evacuation of Jalalabad, and for the escort of the garrison with safety and honour to Peshawar by Afghan troops. The chief argument used by Macgregor was that he knew the ways of men in high places, and that he was convinced that the Supreme Government, after Wild's failure, would abandon the garrison to its fate; and this seems to have been sufficient to satisfy every officer present except Broadfoot, who, single-handed, met the proposal with hot and righteous indignation. Every effort was made to cry him down, and the discussion seems to have lasted for several days, during which Broadfoot found a ready ally in Havelock and gradually persuaded others to his opinion. Finally, all were converted except Sale and Macgregor, who, being left in a minority, were finally overruled. Yet Sale was known as "Fighting Bob"; Macgregor was a man who would go on a mission to any Afghan chief unattended, carrying his life in his hand, and quite indifferent whether he had his throat cut or not; and Dennie, though old and eccentric, had without hesitation attacked the hordes of Dost Mohamed with a single battalion. The incident points the difference between physical and moral courage; but even more does it signalise the rottenness of the Indian administration and the relaxation of the moral fibre of all subject to its rule under the sovereignty of Auckland.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Government at Calcutta was still ignorant of what had happened at Kabul; but it was alive to the shortcomings of Elphinstone, and appointed General Pollock, an artillery officer of the Bengal army who had distinguished himself in Burma, to supersede him, with full political as well as military control. On the 30th of January the news of Brydon's arrival at Jalalabad gave Auckland indisputable knowledge of the disaster at Kabul, and he hastened to

assure to Pollock a force of ten thousand men at Peshawar, while Nicolls began collecting further regiments to take the place of those withdrawn from Ferozepore to the Afghan frontier. Frightened out of his senses, for the Madras army was fully occupied with operations, to be later narrated, in China, Auckland summoned the Fiftieth Foot from Burma, and half of the Twenty-second from Bombay to Karachi, gave orders for raising an additional company for every native infantry regiment in all three Presidencies, and begged for three more of the Queen's regiments from England. What he intended to do with all of these troops, when he got them, he was not very clear. Sir Jasper Nicolls, who kept his head with great calmness throughout this critical time, summed up the situation coolly and clearly. There would, he said, be no difficulty in forcing a way to Kabul, and there was much to be said for doing so in order to make a display of power. But thirty-three thousand men had proved too few to overawe the tribes of Afghanistan, so that the country could not be held permanently, to say nothing of the difficulties of the climate and the long line of communication; and it was questionable whether an advance would have any great effect, if followed by a retirement, with what dignity soever, immediately afterwards. Moreover, it was certain that the news of the reverse at Kabul would spread like wildfire from the Punjab to Burma, and therefore a force must be held in readiness to crush down a rising in any quarter. Nicolls, therefore, was not disposed for any renewal of the contest. Auckland, for his part, was hopelessly cowed and irresolute; and, as is the way of weak men, he sought to throw upon others the burden of decision. 1842. Jan.

In the first instance, therefore, Auckland ordered that Pollock, if it suited him, might give up Jalalabad after withdrawing Sale's brigade and concentrate again at Peshawar; but later, while more or less adhering to the policy of making no great effort against Kabul, he

1842. Jan. wished that this intention should be kept secret, obviously with the idea of changing it if it should be severely criticised. Mr. Clerk, further, was instructed that operations in advance of the Khyber should not be undertaken unless some unexpected turn in affairs should demand or encourage a forward movement, and that the Sikhs were to be informed accordingly, so that they might take their own measures for securing their western frontier. But he was empowered at his discretion to delay the withdrawal of the British troops from Peshawar. Practically, the Governor-general threw upon Clerk the responsibility of determining what should be done with Pollock's army. As regards Nott, Auckland's orders were equally vague. First, Nott was, in the event of the loss of Kabul, to instruct all detachments to fall back on their nearest supports and to take the garrison of Ghazni under his command, with a strong hint that he had better direct it to retreat. Next Nott was to hold on to Kandahar in concentrated strength until further orders; and finally, after the fate of Elphinstone had been ascertained, Nott was bidden to use his own judgement to ensure the safety of his force and the honour of the British arms; and, if he decided to fall back on Quetta, he was to bring with him the garrisons of Kalat-i-Ghilzai and Ghazni. Evidently Auckland longed to awake one morning and find that Afghanistan had been evacuated, while carefully guarding himself against the possibility of being held answerable for the evacuation.[1]

To Nott, for his part, the news of the rising at Kabul came as no surprise, and the reaction of the occurrences there soon made itself felt. On the morning of the 27th of December 1841, the senior regiment of Jan Baz horse mutinied, murdered its commander, Golding, and dispersed. The mutineers were pursued

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 2 of 1842, Gov.-gen. in Council to Nicolls, Jan. 28; vol. 3 of 1842, the same to Nicolls, Feb. 19; Indian government to Clerk and Nicolls, Feb. 10; vol. 4 of 1842, Indian government to Pollock, Feb. 24, 1842; Durand, pp. 414-421.

by other horse of Nott's garrison and some thirty or forty of them were cut down; but another body of Jan Baz horse mutinied on the same day; and the situation was not pleasant. In the first week of January the insurrection in the Kandahar province was general, and the Durani chiefs, who had so far remained faithful, were expected daily to fall away from the British. Saftar Jang, a son of Shah Shuja, joined the insurgents, and Mohamed Akhtar, being reinforced from Kabul, advanced more and more closely upon Kandahar. Rawlinson recommended negotiation with the leading chiefs for peaceful withdrawal of Nott's troops under the terms of a treaty. Nott flatly refused to consent to anything of the kind. Rawlinson then pressed him to sally out against the Afghans; but Nott, unwilling to venture his transport-camels at a distance during the severe weather, refused, to Rawlinson's great indignation, to fight except under the walls of Kandahar. He was still very imperfectly informed as to the progress of events at Kabul, and only learned of Macnaghten's death on the 30th of January, more than five weeks after the event. "Poor fellow," was the general's comment, ". . . his system was always wrong. . . . I fear that his three years' doings cannot be retrieved, and that our blood must flow for it."[1] 1842. Jan.

In February Nott received from the Supreme Government the resolution of the 6th of January which placed both Pollock and himself in authority over all political agents; and Rawlinson was thenceforward subject to his orders. It was high time, for even so good an officer as Rawlinson had been writing to his brother agents in terms of intolerable disrespect because Nott had declined to obey his orders. As to his general policy, Nott was perfectly clear. It was, in his judgement, out of the question to think of with-

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 3 of 1842, Rawlinson to Hammersley, Jan. 8; vol. 4 of 1842, Rawlinson to Outram, Jan. 22, 1842; Stocqueler, *Life of Sir William Nott*, i. 408.

1842. Jan. drawing into India until September, since any movement into Sind before the end of the hot season would mean the destruction both of his army and of his transport. It was, of course, possible that the junction of the victorious Afghans from Kabul with the insurgents about Kandahar might compel him to fall back to Quetta; and the Supreme Government, anticipating this contingency, had given orders for the advance of troops from Sind to the eastern end of the Khojak pass, to facilitate such a movement. But though hampered by want of cavalry, which disinclined him to take the offensive, so short of money that the pay of his men was three months in arrear, and deficient both in ammunition and medical stores, Nott had little doubt of his ability to hold Kandahar for as long as the Indian government might desire. He had a concentrated force of seventy-five hundred men of all descriptions, and he had laid up five months' reserve store of provisions. Finally, he was his own master, and could do as he pleased without reference to political agents.

Meanwhile, his immobility so far encouraged the insurgents that they drew very close to Kandahar, intercepting supplies from the neighbouring villages and plundering such chiefs as remained well disposed
Mar. 7. to the British. On the 7th of March, therefore, Nott sallied out with four thousand men, moving south-westward upon the enemy's camp at Panjwai, which was reached on the 8th and found to be deserted. Small parties of the enemy's horse alone were seen upon these two days, but on the 9th the main body, some twelve thousand strong, was encountered at Lakani, and Nott hoped for a general engagement. The Afghans, however, never permitted him to approach nearer than within cannon-shot, and drew off, leaving the British to bivouac for the night. On the 10th Nott retired to Panjwai, once again meeting nothing but small bodies of cavalry; and, pursuing his way back to Kandahar on the 11th,

learned that during his absence the enemy had on the 10th attacked Kandahar and had been repulsed. 1842.

Saftar Jang and Akhtar Khan had, in fact, executed a very skilful manœuvre. Having drawn away Nott to Lakani they had doubled back to Kandahar on the night of the 9th, leaving sharp-shooters to fire a few shots into Nott's camp and keep it alarmed during the hours of darkness; and by the morning of the 10th they were seen in force round the city. The garrison was on the alert; all gates were shut, and all precautions were taken. After sunset a villager presented himself at the Herat gate with a donkey-load of faggots and asked for admission, which being refused, he threw down his faggots against the gate and went away. At 8 P.M. a party of the enemy stole up to the gate, poured oil over the faggots and set fire to them. In this way the gate was speedily demolished, and the enemy then attacked with resolution. Happily the Commissary, who was on the spot, seeing the danger hastened to barricade the gateway with flour-bags. The Afghans surmounted this barrier, but were driven back, and after unsuccessful assaults, repeated at intervals for five hours, they finally abandoned the attempt, having suffered heavy loss. The Afghan design had been to fire all of the gates and attack them simultaneously, but an officer of the Fortieth, observing faggots outside the citadel gate, when he closed it at sunset, removed them and so averted the danger. With a garrison of only twenty-five hundred men to a large perimeter, a simultaneous assault upon two of the gates would probably have caused the fall of Kandahar. Critics, wise after the event, blamed Nott for taking so large a force into the field and leaving so weak a garrison in the city; but if he had sallied out with a smaller force and suffered a reverse in the field, they would equally have censured him for leaving too many men behind the walls of the fortress. A general in Nott's position must take his choice of Mar. 9

1842. March. risks, and of two hazards Nott probably chose the less.[1]

The effect of his operations was not decisive, for, though the Afghan foot dispersed to their homes, their horse remained out in strength, cutting off all communications and intercepting all supplies. Dearth of forage, long troublesome, became so serious that on the 24th of March Nott was fain to send out Colonel Wymer with a brigade of infantry to secure the camels fresh grazing-ground, which, after a brisk little action with the Durani horse on the 25th, was, without further difficulty, accomplished. But apart from Kandahar itself, Nott was responsible also for the detachments at Kalat-i-Ghilzai and at Ghazni, as to the fate of which latter disquieting rumours were afloat. Ghazni, which was garrisoned by the Twenty-seventh Native Infantry under Colonel Palmer, had in fact been invested on the 20th of November, and closely beleaguered since the 7th of December. The inhabitants, undermining the walls, admitted their countrymen into the city, and the garrison was obliged to retire to the citadel. Short of fuel, though the thermometer stood below zero, short of provisions and constantly harassed by the Afghan sharp-shooters, Palmer held out until the 6th of March, when, being in difficulties even for water, he agreed to surrender on condition that the garrison should march out with colours, arms, ammunition and baggage, and be escorted to Peshawar. He marched out, accordingly, but his men were treacherously attacked on the following day, and, after defending themselves for nearly a fortnight with heavy loss, the survivors were swept into captivity. In Kalat-i-Ghilzai, on the other hand, the little garrison, though suffering extremity of hardship from cold and exposure, held its own gallantly without a thought of surrender.

Meanwhile, Brigadier-general England, who had succeeded Brooks in command of the Sind field-force,

[1] Neill, *Recollections of Four Years' Service in the East*, pp. 174-186; Stocqueler, i.

had reached Dadhar at the end of February, and received orders to assemble a strong force at Quetta in order to escort reinforcements, treasure and ammunition for the help of Nott through the Khojak pass. He himself marched from Dadhar on the 7th of March with such troops as were with him,[1] and it was reckoned that by the end of the month he would have under his hand a battery of horse-artillery, two batteries of field-artillery, the Forty-first Foot, four battalions of sepoys and some four hundred native cavalry. Arriving at Quetta on the 16th, England, being greatly in want of transport-animals, decided to advance into the valley of Pishin in the hope of obtaining more camels there, a measure which seems to have been approved, if not suggested, by the political agent Hammersley. On the 26th, accordingly, he moved out from Quetta, and early on the morning of the 28th he arrived at the entrance of a defile leading to the village of Haikalzai, where he came upon the enemy posted behind *sangars* and prepared to dispute his advance. England, therefore, ordered his guns to open fire, and attacked with the four light companies of his force, the remainder of the Forty-first following in support. The Afghans seem to have allowed the light companies to approach within close range, when they poured in so destructive a fire that the assailants gave way, and fell back on the support, hotly pursued by the Afghan cavalry. The support formed square and repulsed the Afghan horse, and the light companies quickly rallied, ready for a fresh attempt. But England had suffered nearly one hundred casualties, seven-tenths of them among the Forty-first, and nothing would induce him to try another attack. He retired for the night three miles to north-east, and on the 29th retreated to Quetta, where he proceeded to throw up fortifications round the cantonments as though the whole country were upon him. 1842. March.

This was a foolish and most unnecessary little

[1] 4 horse-artillery guns; 5 companies of the 41st Foot; 6 companies of N.I.; 100 Poonah Horse.

1842. reverse. The object of England's advance was to escort treasure and ammunition to Nott at Kandahar, and to accomplish this purpose he had much better have waited at Quetta until the whole of his troops had joined him, so as to make success certain. There was no advantage whatever to be gained in moving nearer to the Khojak pass with a weak detachment, for he knew that Nott, anxious to keep his force together, would send no troops to meet him. In fact, he achieved nothing beyond throwing away lives to no purpose and shattering his own unsteady nerves. Nott was furious, and wrote him a stinging letter, telling him that his advance to Haikalzai and subsequent retreat to Quetta had done more injury to the Kandahar force than twenty thousand Afghans in the field; that the new fortifications of Quetta, requiring a garrison of fifteen hundred men, were absolutely useless, since the citadel, held by five hundred men, was ample for all purposes of defence; and, finally, that he would send out a brigade from Kandahar on the 25th of April, and expected England to meet him at Chaman, by the northern foot of the Khojak pass, without fail on the 1st of May. Nott might have added, if he had known it, that this reverse gave serious encouragement to the Amirs of Sind to turn against the British; but this unhappy expedition seemed to be doomed to mishandling by incompetent men, both civil and military, to the very end.[1]

Feb. Meanwhile, on the 5th of February, Pollock had arrived at Peshawar, where he found Wild's troops sunk in the lowest depths of demoralisation after their repulse. A thousand of them were in hospital, and the number of the invalids rose in a few days to eighteen hundred, sick hearts reacting upon sick bodies. The officers were little better than the men, and the spirit of the whole force was in the highest degree discredit-

[1] Stocqueler's *Life of Sir William Nott*, ii. 2-20; Kaye, ii. 431-444; Parliamentary Papers, *Military Operations in Afghanistan*, 1843, pp. 219-222.

able. In the circumstances it was impossible for Pollock to think yet of an advance through the Khyber pass, for, even after the arrival of McCaskill's brigade,[1] which marched into Peshawar a day or two after him, he could count upon no more effective men than Wild had commanded a month before. The first and urgent matter was to raise the moral tone of the sepoys, which grew daily worse. Depression was turning to mutiny. The four native battalions, which had been with Wild, positively refused to advance, and McCaskill's brigade had not been in camp forty-eight hours before emissaries from Wild's force were among them spreading disaffection. All this Pollock set himself at once to cure; and though Sale at Jalalabad was still shrieking for relief, Pollock, while lamenting his own inevitable inactivity, had the moral courage to stand fast until he had tempered the tool which he was presently to handle. Well he knew that any fresh military reverse might bring down Sikhs and Sindians and mountain tribes upon the whole line of the British communications. 1842. Feb.

Sale, for his part, remained strangely apathetic and unenterprising, though not really straitened, except in the matter of forage, having apparently no plans but to strengthen his fortifications and wait for the Afghans to come and besiege him. On the 19th of February a great portion of the said fortifications was destroyed by an earthquake; but the enemy took no advantage of this piece of good fortune; and within five days the parapet had been rebuilt by strenuous labour, and the place was once again comparatively secure. On the 25th Mohamed Akbar camped within three miles of Jalalabad to westward, and by the 2nd of March he had extended his force round the eastern side also, more or less completing the investment of the place, and cutting off the supplies of food hitherto brought in by the villagers. The Afghans also gave serious trouble to Sale's foragers, chiefly through Sale's own fault. He would never send out parties sufficiently March.

[1] 9th Foot; 26th N.I.

1842. March. strong to protect them; and, when the grass-cutters came running in before the threat of some little body of the enemy, Sale immediately ordered the covering troops to retire also, thus deliberately training his men daily to run away from a twentieth part of their own numbers. Happily, the Afghans were generally content with one demonstration of this kind every morning and then returned to their camp, whereupon the grass-cutters went out again without any protection at all and brought in a good supply. Had Sale shown any enterprise, he need never have been seriously troubled at all, but he seems to have been a man of stupidity so abnormal that he could neither think himself nor entertain the thoughts of others.[1]

Within a month after the earthquake the fortifications were stronger than ever, but the enemy, growing bolder with Sale's timidity, on the 24th of March pressed the foragers so hard as to bring on a smart skirmish, in which Broadfoot was wounded. To diminish the more effectively Sale's supplies of forage, Akbar caused large flocks of sheep to be driven over the more distant foraging ground, so that the grass within range of Sale's guns might be exhausted by repeated cutting. Growing more confident through immunity the Afghans actually, on the 31st of March, pushed one flock within eight hundred yards of the walls, but Sale would not sanction any attempt to capture it; and it was only after hours of pestering that his officers at last persuaded him to sanction a
April 1. sortie on the 1st of April. The result was that nearly five hundred sheep were brought in at a cost of no more than one man killed and eight slightly wounded, a great encouragement to the half-starved garrison,
April 6. and a neat little stroke at the enemy. Five days later news was brought in that Pollock had been repulsed in an attempt to force the Khyber pass, and Akbar fired a royal salute in honour of the victory.

[1] Broadfoot's *Career of George Broadfoot*, p. 89; Seaton, *From Cadet to Colonel*, i. 301-310.

The story was, as shall be seen, a false one; but it gave Sale's officers a pretext for urging immediate action upon him, so that by a march upon Dakka he might take the Khyberris in rear, while Pollock attacked them in front. 1842. April.

Accordingly, on the 7th, three columns of infantry, under Dennie, Monteith and Havelock, assembled at the west gate, and the artillery and cavalry at the south gate, with orders to march direct upon Akbar's camp, which extended from the Kabul river to the Kabul road, on the west of the city, to burn it and to capture his guns. Havelock, on the right, was to move north-westward to clear the ground by the river, Dennie in the centre, and Monteith on the left to advance due west direct upon the camp. Within half-a-mile of the west gate was a ruinous old fort which the enemy had patched up and occupied as an outpost with two or three hundred men. These fired upon Dennie's column as it advanced; and Sale at once halted the column, sent for his guns and ordered an immediate assault. There was no occasion for anything of the kind. The fort was no impediment to the forward movement; and, if Akbar's main body were dispersed, its garrison was trapped and could be dealt with at leisure. But "Fighting Bob" had gained his name by persistently butting his head at stone walls, and was not to be turned from pursuing his one and only tactical idea. The assault was a complete failure. Dennie was killed, several men fell killed and wounded with him; the advance of the left column was delayed; and the whole mass of the Afghan horse swept down upon Havelock. Coolly forming square Havelock repulsed them with heavy loss, and Sale, presently awaking to his folly, abandoned the assault upon the fort and resumed the original plan of the advance. The Afghans opened fire from their cannon with some small effect, but, not waiting for the infantry to close, fled away. Some, including the garrison of the fort, flung themselves into the river, which, being swollen

1842. and rapid, swallowed up many, and the rest followed the bank of the stream up the valley. Akbar's guns, some of them taken from Elphinstone, ammunition, plunder and provisions, all fell into Sale's hands, and by nightfall there was not an Afghan within eight miles of Jalalabad. The casualties did not exceed fourteen of all ranks killed and sixty-six wounded, and, but for Sale's criminal folly, should not have amounted to one-half of the number. The whole action is plain proof that if Sale had really deserved his name of a fighting soldier he need never have been beleaguered in Jalalabad at all.

March. Meanwhile, Pollock had on the 29th of March received the last reinforcements for which he was waiting, namely, a battery of Bengal horse-artillery and the Third Light Dragoons,[1] and prepared to enter the Khyber pass. On the 31st he moved to Jamrud, intending to advance on the next day; but the Sikh troops, which after much persuasion had been suffered by the authorities at Lahore to support him, were late in arriving. Heavy rain caused further delay; and the desertion of the camel-drivers up to the very last moment was a further serious embarrassment. Pollock had appealed to his officers to reduce their baggage and followers to the very lowest that was possible, and had set the example by taking no more baggage-animals for himself than one camel and two mules; but sheer lack of cattle and drivers ensured that his force should not be over-encumbered. Not until the

April. 5th of April was he able to begin his advance, and then always in a dispiriting atmosphere. The Sikhs were still terrified at the prospect of entering the defile; Avitabile averred that Pollock was marching to certain destruction; the sepoys of Wild's brigade were still deserting. There was much to shake the nerve of a commander unless he felt full confidence in himself.[2]

Fortunately, Pollock knew his business, and was not a man to take fright at shadows. His dispositions

[1] Third Hussars.

[2] Kaye, ii. 329-331, 338.

were as follows. A column made up of four companies of the Ninth and eight companies of sepoys, under Colonel Taylor of the Ninth, were to clear the heights on the right of the pass; a second column similarly composed, with the addition of four hundred Afghan sharp-shooters, under Colonel Moseley, were to clear those on the left. When this should have been accomplished, four companies of the Ninth and eight of sepoys, drawn from both columns, were to descend the hills, ready to enter the pass with fourteen more companies of sepoys and ten guns, which were drawn up opposite the entrance. The rear-guard, under Brigadier-general McCaskill, was composed of seven squadrons of cavalry, three companies of infantry and five guns.[1] The troops moved off at 3 A.M. without call of bugle or beat of drum. The heights were covered with the enemy on both sides, waiting for the British in a body to enter the pass, across the mouth of which they had thrown up a barricade of huge stones, heavy branches and mud. To their surprise, they found the British ascending the hills to attack them, and they seem to have offered but a poor resistance, the steepness of the ground and the exhaustion of surmounting it being the chief difficulties that beset the assailants. Having cleared both flanks, the main column made its way through the barricade and pursued its march with little opposition to Ali Masjid. No baggage was lost, and the rear-guard, which was not engaged at all, got into camp by 2 P.M. The casualties did not exceed fourteen killed and one hundred and twenty-one wounded and missing, and were confined almost entirely to the flanking-parties,

1842. April.

[1] The actual distribution of the troops was this: *Right flanking column:* advance—2 cos. 9th Foot, 4 cos. 26th N.I.; rear—1½ cos. 9th, 4½ cos. 64th N.I. *Left flanking column:* 4 cos. 9th Foot, 4 cos. each of 26th and 64th N.I., 400 Jezailchees. *Main column:* 7 cos. 30th N.I., 7 cos. 53rd N.I., 10 guns. *Rear:* 6 cos. 60th N.I., 6 cos. 33rd N.I. *Rear-guard:* 2 guns H.-A., 3 guns F.-A., 2 squadrons H.M. 3rd L.D., 10th Bengal L.C., 2 troops of Irreg. Horse, 1 co. H.M. 9th Foot, 1 co. 6th N.I., 1 co. 60th N.I.

1842. April. the Ninth Foot alone bearing nearly one-third of the total losses. The enemy's dead and wounded were reckoned at the time to have amounted to eight or nine hundred, an estimate which should probably be divided by one-half.

Thus the dreaded pass was forced with little difficulty, and the Sikhs, who had hung back until success was assured, advanced by a parallel defile to Ali Masjid, and undertook to keep open Pollock's communications. Pollock meanwhile pursued his way on the 6th unmolested, despite of the unwieldy convoy with which he was encumbered for his own needs and those of Sale. The march appears to have been uneventful, and on the 16th of April Pollock's force reached Jalalabad, where he found Sale's troops better off, except in the matter of wine and beer, than his own. Thus the safety of the garrison was assured; but now the question arose what was to be done next; and Pollock wrote to the Supreme Government enumerating the difficulties that beset him. The contracts for his hired carriage-cattle extended only to their march to Jalalabad, upon arrival at which place the Commissary was pledged to return them to Peshawar. The animals remaining were too few to enable him to move freely about the country and live upon such supplies and forage as he could capture. Moreover, for several marches between Jalalabad and Kabul no forage was obtainable. The establishment of depôts along the line would eat up the entire force in garrisons. Even if transport-animals were more abundant, the conveyance of forage for them would so swell their numbers that the protection of the convoys would be impossible. The Afghans might, of course, be paid to lay up stores of forage for the army, but, if they played false, they could destroy it. He therefore judged an advance upon Kabul to be for the present unwarrantably hazardous. If the advance could have been made by Kandahar, success would have been certain. Meanwhile, though it was

impossible to advance, it was equally impossible to withdraw and leave Nott to be overwhelmed at Kandahar. Mackeson, at this same time, put the situation even more pithily to Nott. No force, he said, could conveniently protect more than fifteen days' supplies, besides its treasure, ammunition and baggage, through the passes. At present every village was deserted. By moving slowly and restoring confidence among the inhabitants, it might be possible eventually to reach Kabul; but at the moment it was out of the question.[1] 1842. April.

This letter from Pollock caused considerable disturbance to the Supreme Government. At the end of February Lord Ellenborough had taken over the Governorship-general from Auckland, and on the 15th of March he had, in a general review of the situation, declared his intention of re-establishing the British military reputation by a signal blow at the Afghans, so as to prove to them that, if the army should ultimately evacuate Afghanistan, it was not from inability to maintain its position. It seems that copies of this document, which practically avowed the determination to withdraw from Afghanistan, were sent to the principal political agents; and it is certain that though Ellenborough flattered himself that he had preserved secrecy concerning the matter, and had "taken unusual measures to do so," it was, by the middle of May, the common talk of every cantonment in India and every village in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, wishing to be nearer to the scene of action, Ellenborough left Calcutta for Allahabad on the 6th of April, and at Benares received the news of Pollock's arrival at Ali Masjid, of Sale's final success against Akbar Khan before Jalalabad, and of England's failure before Haikalzai and his subsequent retreat to Quetta. Therewith he seems to have made up his mind, in the language of commerce, to cut his losses, and to call

[1] *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 16 of 1842, Pollock to Indian government, April 20; Mackeson to Nott, April 18, 1842.

1842. April. back the army to the east bank of the Indus as soon as possible. On the 19th of April he sent orders to Nott to blow up the fortifications of Kalat-i-Ghilzai, withdraw the garrison, evacuate Kandahar, retreat to Quetta, and there remain until the heat should permit him to fall back to Sukkur. On the same day he addressed the Commander-in-chief, leaving it to him to decide where Pollock's force had best remain during the hot months until it also should be able to retire across the Indus. He still had hopes that the troops might have a chance of striking a severe blow at the Afghans, but doubted whether it were justifiable to push them forward again merely to revenge losses or redeem their military character. If new aggressive movements were deemed necessary, it would be for consideration whether the army should not be concentrated in one body and should not take up a new line of operations leading directly upon Ghazni.[1]

The impression left by these proceedings is that Ellenborough was an impulsive man. The idea of reinvading Afghanistan by a single line of operations was sound enough, but the withdrawal of Nott's force without any demonstration on the side of the Khyber to take pressure off him, to say the least, was ill-considered. However, Sir Jasper Nicolls on the 29th instructed Pollock to fall back from Jalalabad to Peshawar, authorising delay in the event of three contingencies only, namely, that the general should have initiated negotiations or operations for the recovery of the prisoners taken during Elphinstone's retreat, or that the Afghans should have moved out from Kabul to attack him. Ten days later, however, Ellenborough, on the 28th of April, again addressed Pollock, conjecturing that the general might possibly have advanced and occupied Kabul, in which case it

[1] Blue Book (papers relating to military operations in Afghanistan, 1843), pp. 167, 223-225, 237-238; *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 10 of 1842, Ellenborough to Nicolls, May 14; vol. 17 of 1842, Nott to Indian government, March 24, 1842.

was still his opinion that the force should be withdrawn as soon as possible to positions within the Khyber pass, from which communication with India would be easy. On the same day he wrote to Outram that he was taking measures to reinforce Nott's army as soon as it should reach the Indus, so as to render it thoroughly efficient in all arms. The inference is that Ellenborough was intent rather on the practical objects of the navigation of the Indus and the overawing of the Amirs of Sind than on any further operations in Afghanistan, though his conjecture that Pollock might have advanced upon Kabul could certainly be construed as a hint that the general could do so without fear of reproof. It was, to say the least, a strange way of conveying instructions to a commander in the field; but yet more strange was the presumption of Ellenborough in thus scattering military orders broadcast without first consulting his military adviser, the Commander-in-chief.[1] 1842. April.

Meanwhile England, in response to Nott's reproof, moved forward again from Quetta on the 26th April, with two battalions, two regiments of horse and a battery of horse-artillery, and on the 28th forced the position of Haikalzai with little difficulty or loss. On the 30th he entered the defile leading to the Khojak pass, halted the column, dismounted, called for a chair and sat down, apparently unable to nerve himself to move further. Nott, however, true to his promise had detached the Second, Sixteenth and Twenty-eighth Bengal Native Infantry, under Colonel Wymer, and these, clearing the pass with no great effort from the northern side, opened the way for England. The two brigades then proceeded without any opposition to Kandahar, entering the city on the 10th of May; and Nott, now sure of money for the purchase of transport, announced to Pollock his intention of marching upon Kabul as early as possible. On the 17th Ellenborough's orders for his retreat burst upon him, to use Rawlinson's words, like a thunderclap. Nott, May.

[1] Blue Book, 1843, p. 235.

1842. May. however, was too good a soldier to demur, but contented himself with saying that the operation would be most difficult, since the natives, being aware of the coming retreat, would now furnish neither supplies nor cattle, but, on the contrary, would employ every possible impediment and annoyance.[1]

Pollock, as has been seen, found himself condemned to inaction from want of transport when he reached Jalalabad, and the relaxation of the old vigilance and excitement at once told upon the garrison. As the heat increased with the approach of summer, fever and dysentery increased likewise. On the 6th of May the second division of Pollock's force marched into Jalalabad, raising it to a strength of some fifteen thousand of all ranks;[2] and then sickness rapidly grew worse and worse. Pollock was for the moment helpless. If he had been ordered at once to return from Jalalabad to Peshawar, he could have used his hired cattle for the purpose; but he had already sent them back when he received Nicolls's order to retire, and without them, or additional transport of some kind, he was not in a condition to obey. Moreover, with the carelessness habitual to Indian administration, a member of Nicolls's staff had privately imparted to a friend on Sale's staff the purport of his chief's instructions. The news at once became the common property of the force, and Pollock dreaded lest it should

[1] Kaye, ii. 444-446; Blue Book, 1843, p. 309.

[2] *Cavalry Brigade :*
H.M. 3rd Dragoons, 1st, 5th and 10th Bengal L.C., 3rd Irregular Horse, 2nd Regt. Shah Shuja's Horse.
1st Infantry Brigade :
H.M. 13th, 35th N.I., Broadfoot's Sappers and Jezailchees.
2nd Infantry Brigade :
H.M. 9th, 26th and 60th N.I., Sappers and Miners.
3rd Infantry Brigade :
30th, 53rd, 64th N.I.
4th Infantry Brigade :
H.M. 31st, 6th and 33rd N.I., Det. 6th Shah Shuja's Infantry.
3 batteries Horse-artillery, 1 battery Field-artillery, mountain battery.

reach the Afghans also, who might then cease to bring in supplies and forage and so deal ruin to the expedition. "These communications are very dangerous," he wrote to Nicolls; but in order to counteract their effect, he ordered Sale's brigade to Fatehabad, nineteen miles to west on the road to Kabul, to mark out a camp. So much enfeebled were the men that they only with difficulty crawled over this distance in three marches, in the first of which four men of the Thirteenth died of apoplexy. By sheer mismanagement, partly of the Commissariat department, partly of the Governor-general, Pollock's column seemed likely to melt away until it should in its turn need a relieving column to extricate it.[1] 1842. May.

A little later arrived Ellenborough's letter of the 28th of April, and Pollock seized the opportunity to interpret it as giving him discretionary powers. He represented that the British prisoners had not been released, that retirement would be construed as admission of defeat, that an advance on Kabul was for every reason politic, and that Nott should be directed to take part in it, since his withdrawal to Quetta must otherwise be very difficult. Moreover, he could find better climates than Peshawar within the pass itself. A few days later he wrote more explicitly to the Supreme Government urging that retirement must on every account be delayed until the hot weather was over. "We must crown the heights," he wrote in effect, "all the way through the pass; it was difficult even in April to supply the troops employed on this duty, and it would be still more difficult now. In fact we could not furnish a continual supply of water, and without it the men cannot ascend precipitous mountains." These are the little points that are overlooked by men who direct operations from a comfortable office hundreds of miles away.[2]

[1] Blue Book, 1843, p. 296; *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 18 of 1842, Pollock to Nicolls, May 24, 1842; Seaton's *From Cadet to Colonel*, ii. 2.

[2] Kaye, ii. 465-466; Blue Book, pp. 296, 304; Pollock to Indian government, May 20, 25, 1842.

1842. June. These letters were decisive. On the 1st of June the Governor-general acknowledged that it was impossible for Pollock to withdraw before October, and expressed a hope that in the interval he might be able to strike a severe blow at the enemy. Nott also was informed that he likewise would not be expected to withdraw below the passes until the same month; and orders were issued for the collection in all quarters of camels and bullocks to enable the troops to move. It was reckoned that Pollock alone would require over fifty elephants, over five thousand camels and over four thousand bullocks, which, after the terrific waste of animals during the original march, might be difficult to supply; but, since he could not even return to India without them, Ellenborough pushed the business forward with all the energy—and this was not a little—that he could muster.[1]

At last, then, two months after the relief of Jalalabad, Ellenborough had made up his mind at least to equip Nott and Pollock with the means of moving at any rate in some direction, though in which direction, except sooner or later eastward, he would not commit himself to say. Nott, however, acting upon his first instructions to retire, on the 19th of May, detached a strong force of the Fortieth Foot, the Second, Sixteenth and Thirty-eighth Native Infantry, with four or five squadrons of horse and ten guns, under Colonel Wymer, to bring away the garrison of Kalat-i-Ghilzai. The enemy took advantage of this division of his force with commendable promptitude. On the 21st they attempted to carry Kalat-i-Ghilzai by escalade with four thousand men, but were beaten back with heavy loss by the garrison, whose casualties did not exceed six wounded, whereas the enemy left over one hundred dead bodies behind them. Another force of some eight thousand men under Akhtar Khan occupied some rocky hills within a mile of the walls of Kandahar, whereupon Nott, on the 29th, sallied out with about

[1] Blue Book, 1843, pp. 297-298, 315, 321, 324, 330, 333, 367.

two thousand men and twelve guns, attacked them and drove them in confusion across the Arghandab, his own casualties amounting to no more than two killed and fifty wounded. In these circumstances, Wymer's task was an easy one; and the garrison of Kalat-i-Ghilzai, which had held out against cold and privation with indomitable spirit under the command of Captain Craigie, returned with Wymer safely on the 10th of June to Kandahar.[1] 1842. May. June.

Towards the end of June Pollock, having received a certain amount of transport, likewise began to bestir himself, and on the 27th sent Major Monteith with the Fourth Brigade to Pesh Bolak to chastise the tribes in the vicinity, which had given much trouble and were known to have appropriated much of the treasure taken from Elphinstone's force. The villagers had fled, so that there was no power of inflicting punishment except by destroying forts and fruit-trees. For the best part of a month Monteith marched from place to place engaged on this duty, meeting with no resistance until, on the 24th of July, he entered the Shinwari valley. The Shinwaris, who held much of the plunder of Elphinstone's force and even one gun, had always been an ungovernable people, and Monteith, to make his power felt, made a progress through the valley destroying every fort. Once only, on the 26th of July, did the tribesmen attempt to stand in defence of one stronghold, but they were easily dispersed by shrapnel from a couple of guns, and by the advance of a few companies of the Thirty-first Foot, and of the Fifty-second and Fifty-third Native Infantry. Not even during a long retirement of over seven miles did they attempt seriously to molest the rear-guard, and Monteith, having done his work, returned on the 3rd of August to Jalalabad. July.

Meanwhile, by great exertions, Pollock had at last been equipped with a sufficiency of transport, and on the 4th of July Ellenborough wrote to him and to

[1] Blue Book, pp. 212-215; Neill, pp. 200-202.

1842. Aug. Nott that his resolution to withdraw the troops from Afghanistan held good, but that they might choose their own route, and that Nott might take that by Ghazni and Kabul in preference to that of Quetta, if he preferred it. The generals took the hint. August came before Pollock received a brief letter from Nott declaring his intention to move from Kandahar upon Kabul; and on the 20th of that month he marched his advanced guard to Gandamak. On the 24th he drove away some tribesmen some two miles ahead after a smart little engagement and returned to Gandamak, where his force was assembling by succession Sept. of brigades. On the 7th of September he resumed the advance with Sale's division,[1] and on the 8th encountered the Ghilzais in position commanding the road through the Jagdalak pass. The tribesmen stood their ground against an accurate fire of shrapnel, but yielded to the attack of the Ninth, Thirteenth and Broadfoot's Sappers, and fled. A few brave men rallied at the summit of an almost inaccessible height, but with great difficulty and fatigue Pollock's men worked their way up to them and drove them also into flight. The casualties did not exceed sixty-four of all ranks killed and wounded.

The second division under McCaskill, which followed the first at the interval of a march, was harassed all day, and the rear-guard was continually and hotly engaged, but brought the cumbrous column of its transport safely through the pass without loss. Meanwhile, Pollock with the first division pushed on to Tezin, having ordered McCaskill to join him there by a forced march, since the enemy was reported to be ahead in strength. Little was gained by this order, for the second division, after a very trying day of constant encounter with the tribesmen, came into camp utterly exhausted, having destroyed over one hundred

[1] 3rd L.D., 1 squadron 1st L.C., 3 troops 3rd Irreg. Cav., H.M. 9th Foot and 13th L.I., 26th and 35th N.I.; 1 co. Sappers, Broadfoot's Sappers, 2 H.-A. guns, 6 light field guns, 3 mountain guns.

animals which were unable to carry their loads further. 1842.
Pollock, therefore, was obliged to halt on the 12th; Sept.
and the enemy, gaining courage from his apparent hesitation, pressed so closely upon the picquets that it was necessary to drive them off by a counter-attack. On the 13th the advance was resumed, and the Afghans, under Akbar Khan, moved forward gallantly to meet the British. Pollock threw forward his European regiments to the attack, the Thirteenth on the right, the Ninth and Thirty-first on the left; and they quickly proved the truth of Wellington's assertion that they could meet any enemy, no matter whether outranged or not, with musket and bayonet. The fight continued for the greater part of the day until the redcoats crowned the summit of the Haft Kotal, and the Afghans fled, having suffered heavily, leaving two guns and three standards in the hands of the victors. The casualties amounted to no more than thirty-two killed and one hundred and thirty wounded; and Pollock's success was decisive. On the 15th of September, he encamped on the race-course at Kabul.

Nott, for his part, set his force in motion on the Aug.
8th of August, making short marches at first in order to distract the enemy from a column of five and a half battalions, cavalry and twelve guns, which was escorting guns and stores to Quetta. He himself retained two battalions of British and six of native infantry, one regiment of light cavalry, besides irregular horse, three batteries and the four siege-guns brought forward by Keane.[1] No enemy was seen until the 28th of August, when the foolish precipitation of a cavalry officer brought on a small engagement in which Nott's cavalry was worsted, with a loss of some fifty killed and wounded. On the 30th an army, or rabble, of some twelve thousand men made some show of resistance at

[1] H.M. 40th and 41st Foot; 2nd, 16th, 38th, 42nd, 43rd Bengal N.I.; 3rd Irreg. Infantry; 3rd Bombay L. Cav.; 2 regiments of Irreg. Horse; 1 troop of Bombay H.A.; 1 troop of the Shah's H.A.; 1 9-pounder battery, 4 18-pounders; detachment of Sappers.

1842. a point about forty miles south-west of Ghazni, but
Sept. gave way after a short engagement, abandoning camp, baggage and guns. By the 4th of September Nott was before Ghazni and began to get his heavy cannon into position; but on the 6th he took peaceful possession of the place, which the enemy had evacuated during the previous night. The fortress was blown up; the sandal-wood gates were taken from the tomb of Sultan Mahmoud, in accordance with Ellenborough's instructions, and on the 10th the advance was continued upon Kabul. There was firing into the British camp upon most nights; but there was no serious resistance, beyond some slight skirmishing at Maidan, to impede Nott's progress to Kabul. On the 17th he encamped within four miles of the city.

There now remained no more to be accomplished but the recovery of the British prisoners, who meanwhile had practically been allowed to escape and were brought in by a detachment of Pollock's cavalry on the 17th. A detachment under General McCaskill was, however, pushed into Kohistan, where many hostile chiefs had taken refuge at Istaliff; and, the place having been taken by surprise, McCaskill pushed on unopposed to Charikar and ruined that fort. Pollock decided also to destroy the great bazaar at Kabul; and,
Oct. this done, the army, on the 12th of October, began to leave Kabul on its return march to Peshawar, Pollock leading the way. The tribesmen were on the watch to plunder, but due precaution was at first observed, the advanced guard detaching to every commanding height a picquet which held its post until the rear-guard had passed, when it descended and formed in its rear, thus increasing the rear-guard continually to
Nov. the end of the march. On the 1st of November, however, between Landi Khana and Ali Masjid, Sale made no such dispositions for the safety of his column, but pushed ahead by himself, as his way was, and left things to chance. The Khyberris saw their opportunity. One party of them engaged the rear-guard

while another rushed into the baggage-column, carried off several score of mules and camels, and inflicted some loss upon the escort. The second division under McCaskill being equally negligent was also attacked, and became involved in a serious affair, which cost numerous casualties, many transport-animals and two guns. The pieces were recovered a few days later by Nott, who brought up the rear. He likewise was continually harassed, but, handling his troops like a soldier, beat the enemy off and brought his column safely through the pass with no more than eighty-four casualties. Thus was accomplished the evacuation of Afghanistan.[1] 1842. Nov.

That even to the end the tribesmen should have been able to wrest advantage from the British was most discreditable and very wrong. From stupid, unteachable old Sale nothing better, perhaps, was to be expected; but McCaskill was supposed to be a good officer and should not have been guilty of such a lapse. Nor is it easy to acquit Pollock of blame, for his force was not a large one, and he should have insisted upon proper conduct of the march by his subordinates. But everything in this wretched campaign was of a piece, and from beginning to end it brought nothing but disgrace. Ellenborough, not without an eye to the effect of a display of strength upon the Sikhs, assembled a large force to receive the returning troops, welcomed them with pageantry and high honour, dubbed the garrison of Jalalabad "illustrious," exalted Sale as a hero, issued high-sounding proclamations, strove in every way to invest the final campaign with a halo of glory. All was in vain. The people of the East were not deceived; and the restoration of Dost Mohamed to the throne of Afghanistan was a confession of defeat. Probably Ellenborough was right to endeavour to put a good face upon a bad business, though, in his effort, he need not have taken leave of

[1] See Diary of Lieut. Trower in *Journal of R.U.S.I.*, Nov. 1915, p. 442; Blue Book, pp. 424-429.

1842. his sense of the ridiculous. But his vacillation when he first took over the direction of affairs in Afghanistan, and the ambiguous terms in which he finally sanctioned the advance of Nott and Pollock to Kabul, leave an unpleasant taste in the mouth. His assertion that he was determined to save India, with an implication that no one else could, rings like a poor parody of Chatham's famous phrase, and suggests nervousness rather than commanding resolution and faith in his own will and ability. He was undoubtedly energetic, and for this he should receive every credit; but he interfered personally in a hundred matters which he should have left to subordinates, and when giving his orders to the troops had not the courtesy to inform, much less to consult, the Commander-in-chief.[1] It may freely be admitted that he found a rotten system of administration in India; and it is possible that only his personal intervention could have hastened certain matters forward. But a great administrator is not one who does all the work himself. He is one who casts away bad instruments, chooses others more fitting, and sits Olympian, seeing that they do their task. He was, however, at least a great improvement upon Auckland.

Of the military commanders, Pollock deserves credit for restoring moral courage to a demoralised force, for waiting despite of Sale's cries until it was really fit to advance, and for enforcing a system of tactics which made an operation, supposed by the timid to be desperate, comparatively simple. That he accomplished this is a testimony to his possession both of nerve and of character. But he was not really an inspiring personality. He had not the gift of moulding his force into a really efficient military instrument, nor of making his will and his spirit dominant among all ranks; and his losses during his withdrawal through the Khyber pass forbid us to rank him high among military commanders.

On the whole, Nott alone of the senior officers came

[1] Kaye, ii. pp. 554-555.

out of the enterprise with credit. He was not a brilliant, but he was a sound man. He had at least one or two military principles to which he clung fast, first, to maintain discipline, and second, to keep his force together and never risk the employment of small detachments in isolation. These may sound elementary, but he was only able to maintain them at the cost of incessant conflict with the political agents; and that he did so maintain them is to his honour, for the struggle involved him in such quarrels with his civil superiors as almost daily to endanger his career. He had plenty of common sense and an inflexible will; but one has a feeling none the less that his outlook was narrow, that his limitations were many and close, and that the inflexible will could, and did, at times degenerate into mere mulish obstinacy. As a Company's officer he was an aggressive champion of the worth of the sepoy and furiously jealous of the Queen's service, sentiments by no means unnatural, nor even dishonourable, in themselves, but liable to become unpleasant and even mischievous when carried to excess. And there was always danger of this with Nott, for he was both an umbrageous and a cantankerous man, ever on the watch for slights, quick to take offence and slow to accept conciliation. Thus he made things more difficult for himself than they would have been to one of more genial temper and with a livelier sense of the ridiculous. It must, however, be said for him that he entered upon his campaign under the shadow of a great personal sorrow; that he showed constancy, patience and determination in peculiarly trying circumstances, and proved himself to be an upright man and a good soldier. 1842.

But for his unfortunate temper it is probable that he and not Sale would have come down to posterity as the hero of this war; and then there would have been fewer instances of generals shutting themselves up in a fortress after making some false movement, and shrieking for the forces of the Empire to deliver them from

the consequences of their own incompetence. This was one great evil which the Army inherited from this unhappy war; but it was as nothing to the evil which has since beset the British in India, not only through the loss of military reputation, but even more through the wanton alienation of the Afghans.

Authorities: The best known account of the War in Afghanistan is the two volumes by Sir J. W. Kaye. It is well written, but wordy and self-important. The best account, so far as it goes, is the unfinished history by Durand. The style and arrangement are bad, but the matter excellent. Hough's account is dry but valuable. Minor authorities, such as Vincent Eyre, Lady Sale, Neill and one or two more, are useful to throw light on details. I found some valuable documents among the chaotic volumes which record the Secret Consultations of the Supreme Council of India.

CHAPTER XXX

At the very end of 1841 there arrived at Bombay Major-general Charles Napier, who had been appointed through the Duke of Wellington to the staff of the Army in India. He assumed command of a brigade on the 28th of December, and in March 1842 was called upon by Lord Ellenborough, who had just received the news of the disaster at Kabul, to advise him as to the means of remedying it. In July he was appointed to the command of Upper and Lower Sind, his jurisdiction extending from the Khojak pass eastward to Sukkur and thence to the sea; and on the 3rd of September he sailed from Bombay for Karachi, where he arrived on the 9th after a terrible passage. For the steamer in which he travelled carried also two hundred British troops, of whom sixty-four died of cholera before the voyage was ended. He had received no instructions from Bombay; he was not even informed as to the number of troops that would be under him; but it was very evident that Ellenborough was apprehensive as to the attitude both of the Amirs of Sind and of the Sikhs, in view of the coming withdrawal of the troops from Afghanistan. 1842. Sept.

Sind, it must be remembered, was divided into three states, Khairpur or Upper Sind, Hyderabad or Lower Sind, and Mirpur, of which the principal Amirs were named Rustam, Nasir Khan and Sher Mohamed, known as the Lion, respectively. Ascending the Indus, Napier visited the Amirs of Hyderabad, whom, having full political as well as military control, he rebuked for

1842. sundry violations of the treaty of 1839. Passing on to
Oct. Sukkur, which he reached on the 5th of October, he there received intimation of the Governor-general's policy. Ellenborough admitted that, looking to the treatment which they had received from Auckland, it was too much to expect the Amirs to be friendly to the British. None the less he had to accept matters as he found them; and he gave distinct orders that if any of the Amirs who had signed Auckland's treaty now evinced hostile intentions, they must be visited with signal punishment. It cannot be questioned that this dealt hard measure to the Amirs; but the situation was in the highest degree critical. Quite apart from the safety of the troops retreating from Afghanistan, the posture of the Sikhs was extremely doubtful; and beyond these considerations there was the darling project of the East India Directors, the navigation of the Indus.

Very quickly Outram, who had been political resident in Sind, discovered and communicated to Napier evidence of hostile designs on the part of the Amirs; and the general, reviewing the situation, recommended that the Indian government should annex Karachi, Sukkur, Bukkur and Sabzalcot, releasing the Amirs in return from all tribute, and that a new treaty to that effect should be signed by them. Ellenborough agreed; two draft treaties for Khairpur and Hyderabad were sent to Napier, and were by him submitted to the two Amirs at the end of November. He of Hyderabad professed obedience; Rustam also yielded, though under protest. Napier distrusted the promises of submission, feeling sure that the Amirs designed to protract negotiations until the heat of summer should make military movements impossible. On the 8th of December he proclaimed the annexation of the country from Sabzalcot to Rohri; on the 16th he threw a strong force across the Indus, and in the next few days he occupied Sabzalcot. The younger Amirs, indignant, half-frightened and half-bewildered

at this summary procedure, gathered in recruits from their clans and made preparation for war. 1842. Dec.

Napier had at this time about eight thousand troops under his hand, including the five battalions of sepoys which had escorted England's column from Kandahar. But all the troops at Sukkur were miserably sickly. The barracks were low houses of mud, without windows, doors or proper means of ventilation; and four hundred men were packed, only four feet apart, in a long low room no more than twelve feet high. The air at night consequently became pestilential; and the men rose from their beds, bathed in sweat, and staggered out into the open air to sleep, where, of course, they caught chills and fevers. Such were the quarters of the British troops in Sind, where the thermometer in summer rises to one hundred and thirty degrees Fahrenheit; and those of the sepoys were even worse. Before the end of November Napier was fain to summon to him the Twenty-second Foot from Karachi.

He still hoped to effect his purpose without bloodshed, and to that end succeeded in gaining over Ali Murad, the ablest of the Amirs of Upper Sind, to whom the unhappy Rustam, at the end of December, resigned his chiefship. Thereupon, the younger Amirs of Khairpur fled away with their followers; and it was said that they had taken refuge at the fortress of Imamgarh, which lay far away in the desert some eighty miles south-east of Khairpur. It occurred to Napier that the capture of this fortress would have a profound moral effect as proving that no stronghold, however remote or difficult of access, was safe from the invincible British troops, and so convincing the Amirs of the hopelessness of resistance.

Having at the end of December established his camp near Khairpur he, on the 3rd of January 1843, moved one march southward to Diji Kot, where he learned that one only of the Amirs, a nephew of Rustam, had gone to Imamgarh. None the less he persisted in his intention to show that he could go 1843. Jan.

1843. Jan. there himself. The enterprise was most hazardous, for he could get no certain information about the route or the watering-places. He had few camels except those that were already weakened by service in Afghanistan, and could not therefore take with him a large force; so he contented himself with three hundred and fifty men of the Twenty-second mounted in pairs on camels, two hundred of the Sind Horse and two twenty-four-pounder howitzers. With these, with water for four days and provisions for fifteen, at midnight on the 5th he plunged into the desert. On the first day he covered twenty-four miles, and on the five ensuing from ten to eleven, the labour of hauling the howitzers through the deep sand being very severe. He found abundance of water on the 6th, 7th and 9th, and reaching Imamgarh on the 12th found it evacuated. A vast quantity of powder had been abandoned in it, so Napier blew it up on the 15th, and, returning by a different route, halted on the 21st a short distance to south of Diji Kot. He had met with no resistance whatever, though he was prepared for it, and he was fortunate in finding Imamgarh deserted, for the place was very strong and stoutly built, and he might not have found it easy to batter a practicable breach with the supply of ammunition that he carried with him. The Duke of Wellington described the operation as one of the most curious military feats that he had ever heard or read of, and, though the British have fought more than one desert campaign since those days, it remains remarkable. Whether it were worth the risk is another matter. Napier certainly believed that it was, and undertook it with the sincere intention of averting bloodshed.

The negotiations were then resumed, Outram, of whom Napier had then a high opinion, having started on the 5th to meet the Amirs or their ambassadors at Khairpur. He saw Rustam on his way, and found the old man full of despair and of mistrust which he was unable to dispel. He reached Khairpur on the

20th and met ambassadors from Lower Sind, but not Rustam, nor any from Upper Sind. Looking into the terms of the treaty, he judged them to be unreasonably harsh, and warned Napier that, if they were insisted upon, no satisfactory settlement could be expected. Returning to the subject, he wrote again condemning the proposed measures as "most tyrannical—positive robbery." "I consider," such was his conclusion, "that every life that may hereafter be lost in consequence will be a murder." Napier was impatient of any opinion that coincided not with his own. He had so far admired Outram, and had christened him the Bayard of India. He was very shortly to fail to find epithets strong enough to express his hatred and contempt of him. 1843. Jan.

Meanwhile, Napier had begun on the 27th to move slowly southward upon Hyderabad, whither the Amirs of Upper Sind, with four thousand armed men, were moving to claim the help of their brethren in Lower Sind. Outram begged Napier for leave to go there likewise, hoping to dissuade those of Lower Sind from receiving them; but the general refused his permission for six days, and the letter in which at last he granted it was intercepted. On the 30th envoys from Hyderabad came to Napier's camp about fifty miles south-west of Khairpur, and were informed that, unless they induced the Amirs of Khairpur to meet Outram at Hyderabad by the 5th of February, the general would treat those Amirs as enemies. Napier was in fact impatient lest the hot weather should come upon him while matters were still unsettled; and the Amirs construed this impatience as determination to fight. Outram, arriving at Hyderabad on the 8th, strove still to avert war, and Napier, who had resumed his march southward on the 6th, twice halted in deference to his entreaties, though he was convinced that Outram was being fooled. So anxious, indeed, was he for Outram's safety that on the 11th he sent a company of the Twenty-second to the Residency at Hyderabad. Jan. 27. Feb.

1843. On the 12th Outram had another conference with the
Feb. Amirs, and at its close was threatened by a furious mob without. The Amirs, confessing that they could no longer restrain their people, begged him to leave the city; but he lingered until the 15th, still vainly hoping to maintain peace, when the Residency was attacked by eight thousand Baluchis, and, after a gallant defence of four hours, he was compelled to withdraw his little garrison to a steamer that was under his orders, and return with them up the Indus to Napier.

He overtook him, on the 16th, at Matiari, some twenty miles above Hyderabad, and found him resolved, with good reason, to fight, for he had intercepted a letter from one of the Amirs of Lower Sind calling upon all clansmen to assemble at Miani, ten miles north of Hyderabad, and a day's march from Matiari. Napier's information was that he would find thirty thousand men collected there to oppose him; and he himself had three thousand only. Yet he never dreamed of shrinking from a battle, having taken to heart Wellington's maxim that one must never retreat before an Oriental enemy. Outram, eager to take his share in the fight now that it was inevitable, asked for a detachment to move with him down the river again and set fire to the forests that lined the road to Miani, for the protection of the general's march. Napier consented, and in the afternoon Outram dropped down stream with two hundred convalescent sepoys. But the Amirs, having information of his plan, shifted their forces eight miles to the east, and the firing of the woods accomplished nothing.

Feb. 17. At four o'clock on the morning of the 17th, Napier set his little force in motion. He had with him the Sind Horse under Captain John Jacob, the Poona Horse and the Ninth Bengal Cavalry, together about eight hundred strong, the Twenty-second Foot, about five hundred bayonets, the First Bombay Grenadiers, Twelfth and Twenty-fifth Bombay Infantry,[1] each of

[1] These last two had formed part of England's column.

them between four and five hundred bayonets, and twelve guns, mostly drawn by camels. The way lay along a level plain intersected by dry water-courses; and, as it was necessary to level these for the camel-teams, progress was very slow. Hence it was not until seven o'clock, after a march of seven miles, that the Sind Horse and the Madras Sappers and Miners which, with two guns, formed the vanguard, reached the dry bed of the river Fuleli, running east of them and parallel to the line of advance. Here the sound of cannon was heard; and Napier, halting the Sappers, pushed forward the Sind Horse to explore both banks of the river. They reported the enemy to be in front; and Napier, moving on with the vanguard, came at about eight o'clock within sight of the enemy's camp. Ascending a hillock, the general could make out on his right front a large wood bounded by a high wall, on which were perched hundreds of matchlock men, and on the left front a grove of mango-trees. In the space of about twelve hundred yards between these two were the enemy's guns irregularly drawn up to cover their flanks, and behind them could be seen bodies of horse in movement, masses of foot, and, in rear of all, the encampment. 1843. Feb. 17.

Napier now halted to await the main column, which had been delayed by the bad condition of the road, sending Captain John Jacob with the Sind Horse round to explore the ground on the left of the enemy's position. To turn the wood on the right would be difficult, for the troops would have to cross the Fuleli under the enemy's fire, and would then have to clear the jungle. Their formation must inevitably be destroyed, and being young soldiers, unused to woodland fighting, they would infallibly shoot each other. Either, therefore, he must turn the left of the Amirs, or make a frontal attack on a re-entrant angle; and what the re-entrant angle might contain it was impossible to discover, for the Baluchi artillery forbade the cavalry to come within five hundred yards of it.

1843. Advancing to within three hundred yards of the wood, Napier deployed, with the Madras Sappers on the extreme right, then his twelve guns, and then in succession the Twenty-second, the Twenty-fifth and Twelfth Bombay Infantry and the First Bombay Grenadiers, the Sind Horse taking the extreme left. In rear of the right the Ninth Bombay Cavalry were held in reserve.

The line remained halted in this formation, pending Jacob's return, and meanwhile a few skirmishers were sent forward to clear the matchlock-men from the wall. Napier noticed that the latter disappeared completely, and drew the inference that they had made no loopholes nor banquette to enable them to fire through or over the wall, so that his right flank might be so far protected. On the other hand, he now perceived that there was a village in the mango-trees on his left, which made that point the more formidable against attack. The enemy's guns kept up a desultory cannonade during this interval, but the range, about a thousand yards, was too great for them, and the shot fell harmless before the feet of the general and his staff. At length Jacob rode up and made his report. On the further side of the village there was a deep ravine with scarped sides, strongly occupied by the enemy and virtually impassable. There was nothing left but to deliver a frontal attack, and, to all intent, to force the passage of a defile with some twenty-eight hundred men against thirty thousand.

At about half-past ten Napier began his advance, pushing his guns forward until they had silenced the hostile artillery, while the infantry followed in echelon of battalions from the right, the left being refused in view of the greater menace of a flank attack from the village. Moreover, riding by the wall of the wood on the right the general noticed an opening, not very wide, which he promptly closed with the Grenadier company of the Twenty-second under Captain Tew, placing the men just within the wood with orders to

block the entrance, if necessary, until the last man should have fallen. Then halting the echelon and dressing the battalions in order to steady his young soldiers, he parked his baggage in a circle, the camels lying down with heads inward, and with bales between their bodies, to form a defensible rampart. Four companies of sepoys and the Poona Horse were told off as baggage-guard, and with the remnant, about two thousand of all ranks, Napier advanced to the attack. 1843. Feb. 16.

The enemy abandoned their guns as the Twenty-second approached, though the echelon encountered a galling fire of matchlock-men; but the onward movement was proceeding steadily, when Napier suddenly perceived, three hundred yards ahead of him, a row of dark faces just showing above the level of the plain. Then he realised that he had utterly mistaken the situation. The Baluchi horse and foot that he had seen were the enemy's reserves; and their main body was ensconced in the bed of the Fuleli, which, unknown to him, made a sudden bend at right angles to his front. The guns were brought forward and unlimbered within a few feet of the bank, but, owing to an outward turn of the wall, there was no room for more than four out of the twelve to come into action, and the remaining eight, together with the Madras Sappers, were crowded out of the line. The infantry advanced steadily, and Napier, waiting for the right moment, gave the word to charge. The Twenty-second dashed forward with a shout, reached the edge of the bank and stopped abruptly. The river-bed was one sea of fierce faces and gleaming swords, and they hesitated to engulf themselves within it. For a short time they stood their ground and poured in volley after volley; but they began to drop fast under the fire of the Baluchi matchlock-men, and presently they shrank back eight or ten paces and would come forward no more.

Their officers, by example and entreaty, did their

1843. Feb. 16. utmost to make them charge again. Lieutenant McMurdo leaped down into the river-bed alone and killed four of the enemy with his own hand, but still the men would not charge. They were quite right. If they had leaped into that host of savage men to fight hand to hand, they would have been swallowed up by numbers. By drawing back only for ten yards they were sheltered from the whole of the Baluchi fire except that of the men who lined the bank, and by advancing to fire and retiring again to load they inflicted much damage and received very little. The sepoys on their left followed their example, and so the fight was maintained. Napier and his staff still called on the men to charge, and at length the Twenty-second cried out, "Mr. McMurdo, if you don't leave off, we'll shoot you." Napier himself rode slowly up and down between the opposing arrays, pouring out torrents of blasphemous exhortation, so close to both sides that he was actually singed by the powder, and yet by some miracle unscathed by either. His appearance was so strange that the Baluchis might well have mistaken him for a demon. Beneath a huge helmet of his own contrivance there issued a fringe of long hair at the back, and in front a large pair of round spectacles, an immense hooked nose, and a mane of moustache and whisker reaching to the waist. But though the opposing arrays were not ten yards apart, neither he nor his horse were touched. From time to time the Baluchis made furious counter-attacks in small bodies. Some chief called upon his clansmen, and they stormed forward, irresistible, bearing the sepoys back; but, being only a few, their flanks were riddled and shattered before they could drive their charge home. Had they made such an onslaught from end to end of the line, they must have carried everything before them. Had they fallen upon the guns, they must inevitably have captured them. But they were an assembly of tribes and not an army, under the direction of a score of chiefs and not of one, and

Napier's cannon swept their masses with enfilading fire of grape unchecked and unmolested. 1843. Feb. 16.

Meanwhile, the British soldiers warmed to their work. At first some of them had fired wildly and high, scorching Napier's huge whiskers. Now they came forward three or four at a time in quick succession, fired and went back to reload, before they could be fired at themselves. They thus crushed the match-lock-men of the Baluchi front rank out of existence, and shot down those who would have taken their place before they could reach it. Still the enemy would not give way; and their right was little troubled because the officer in command of the Bombay Grenadiers, evidently an unintelligent person, kept his men back, so as to preserve the echelon formation originally prescribed to him. Jacob, after a bold effort to turn the grove on that flank, had returned to report that he could not pass the deep nullah. Napier perceived that it was time for decisive action, and ordered the whole of his cavalry to charge the Baluchis' right flank. Passing in single file between the Grenadiers and the village, two squadrons of the Ninth Light Cavalry cleared the enclosures about the houses, and swept down upon the river-bed, while another squadron, crossing it, fell upon the front, and the Sind Horse upon the flank, of the Baluchi reserves. The enemy in the river-bed wavered; Napier's infantry sprang down among them; and, meanwhile, the Sappers having made a breach in the wall, a gun was pointed through it which quickly swept the wood clear with grape. But still the Baluchis fought on, and when at last they gave up the struggle in the river-bed, they fled not, but stalked slowly away. Napier, however, was now able to bring the whole of his guns into action; the last groups were thus broken up; and the field was won.

The fight had lasted for four hours, and in that time some two thousand Baluchis had fallen. Four hundred corpses alone were heaped up within a circle of fifty

1843. Feb. 16. yards' radius. In Napier's force there fell sixty-four of all ranks killed and one hundred and ninety-four wounded, the share of the Twenty-second being one officer and twenty-three men killed, six officers and fifty-two men wounded. In the circumstances the casualties of the British cannot be considered heavy, for, beyond all question, they walked straight into a trap. How far Napier was to blame for this, it is not easy to say. It seems strange that no guide should have told him of the course of the Fuleli; and considering that he mistook the reserves of the Baluchis for their front line, it is not quite clear why a staff officer or two, or even a line of skirmishers, should not have been pushed forward to examine the ground over which he purposed to advance. But it is not difficult to be wise after the event; and, since Napier by sheer tenacity overcame all difficulties, it would be churlish to grudge him his meed of praise. Confronted with a most disconcerting surprise at a time when he had already committed himself beyond recall to a certain plan of action, he was not for a moment dismayed, but carried that plan through with inflexible determination. Never was there a more signal instance of the triumph of what is called the will to victory. On the other hand, it is remarkable that such a veteran should have chosen the wrong tactics for the fighting of the battle, and that his young soldiers, who had never seen a shot fired, should instinctively have chosen the right and stuck to them in defiance of all commands.

Napier encamped for the night on the plain beyond the Fuleli; and in the morning emissaries arrived to ask him what terms he would grant the Amirs. "Life, and nothing more," he answered, "and I require your decision before noon." Presently three Amirs of Hyderabad arrived, gave up their swords and promised to surrender the fortress of Hyderabad. On the 19th two more Amirs from Khairpur gave in their submission, and Sher Mohamed, Amir of Mirpur, known as the Lion, who had been encamped with

ten thousand men only six miles from Miani during the battle, likewise sent a friendly message. By Outram's advice Napier answered that, if the Lion disbanded his troops, he should be treated as a friend or ally. On the 19th the British marched into Hyderabad; two more Amirs, who had failed to yield themselves up, were made prisoners; and all, outwardly, seemed to be well. But in truth Napier was uneasy, and with good reason. His force was seriously diminished; the Lion, far from dispersing his followers, was assiduously gathering in recruits; the sun was daily waxing in strength, which signified increase of sickness among the Europeans; and it was useless to march against the Lion who, even if defeated, could always take refuge in the desert. He therefore resolved to stand fast, threw up an entrenched camp on the east bank of the Indus, near Hyderabad, and wrote both to Sukkur and Karachi to summon reinforcements. 1843. Feb.

Swiftly the plot thickened. The wild hill-tribes to west of the Indus were preparing to descend upon the plains, greedy of plunder, and Karachi itself was threatened by the most powerful chief in Southern Sind. By the second week in March the Lion's following exceeded five and twenty thousand men, and Napier, on the 13th, summoned further reinforcements from Ferozepore. Ellenborough, however, had of himself ordered a brigade from that place to Sukkur, whither Colonel Roberts, the commandant, who had already despatched troops by water in response to Napier's first appeal, now sent a battalion of infantry, a regiment of cavalry and five guns by land, under command of Major Stack. On the 15th the Lion advanced to within twelve miles of Hyderabad and sent envoys to propose terms to Napier. These arrived just upon the firing of the evening gun, which, the general told them, they might take for their answer. None the less he was extremely anxious lest Stack might be intercepted; but Sher Mohamed did not attack Stack's column until it was within five March.

March. miles of Hyderabad, and then so unskilfully that he was with little difficulty repulsed. By midnight of the 22nd Stack had brought his brigade safely into Napier's camp.

On the forenoon of the 23rd, by a remarkable coincidence, the reinforcements from Sukkur and Karachi arrived simultaneously from up and down stream, raising Napier's force to five thousand men. The rest of the day was spent in active preparation, and early on the 24th he marched out northward with the regiments that had fought at Miani, also the Eighth and Twenty-first Bombay Infantry, the Third Bengal Cavalry and five additional guns. His direction was upon Khuseri, where the Lion was reported to lie. After travelling four miles Napier learned from a peasant that the enemy had moved further to east, and, altering his course accordingly, he sent the Sind Horse forward to reconnoitre. At 8 A.M. a trooper rode in with the news that the entire army of the Lion was drawn up at Dabo only two miles away. Napier galloped forward to see for himself, but could make out remarkably little. There were two woods a mile apart, which seemed to be the right and left of the enemy's position. About the right centre was a grove of trees which was conjectured to conceal a village, though no houses were to be perceived; and, in rear of what Napier judged to be the Baluchi left, were visible great masses of horse. Closer reconnaissance of the front of this position was impossible except through an actual attack, but examination of the enemy's right flank showed that it rested on the Fuleli, which, dry elsewhere, was at this point a half-dried water-hole of deep soft mud. This obstacle banished all ideas of an assault upon that flank; and the wood beside the river was found to extend so far to the enemy's rear as to prohibit any but a very wide turning movement. Furthermore, the approach to the enemy's line was contracted, for it lay across the Fuleli, through a kind of defile formed

by a network of ravines; and the bed of the river made a great loop, which practically would enclose the whole rear of the British after the defile was passed. In fact, the ground was awkward and cramped, full of dangerous possibilities in the event of a mishap. 1843. Mar. 24.

So much Napier could mark with his own eyes. What he could not see was something far more formidable. Along the whole length of the line ran two parallel water-courses, the foremost twenty feet wide and eight feet deep, the rearward forty-two feet wide and seventeen feet deep, both of which had been scarped to form a parapet, with one or two ramps prepared for advance or retreat. In these water-courses were ensconced the first and second lines of Baluchi infantry with their guns posted behind them. On the right Baluchi flank the village of Dabo, of which Napier could see nothing, was filled with men, the houses being loopholed and prepared for defence. And the Baluchi line did not end, as Napier supposed, with the wood on their left; but a water-course, which likewise had been scarped and strengthened, ran back for half a mile at an obtuse angle from the ravines in front; and this was the true left of their array. Moreover, the enemy had formed yet another line of resistance in ravines some distance in rear of their main position. Altogether they had chosen their ground well, and developed its advantages with admirable skill.

The course of the British march led the head of the column in a direction diagonal to the hostile line; and Napier deployed upon this same alignment, with his cavalry on either flank and his guns in the intervals between battalions, the Twenty-second forming the extreme left of his infantry. Having been warned by spies that the Baluchis had selected five thousand of their choicest warriors to assail him as soon as he should attack, he conjectured that this onslaught would probably be delivered from the wood on his right, and he accordingly pushed forward the cavalry

1843. Mar. 24. on that wing under Major Stack, to gain himself time enough for changing front to meet it. Meanwhile, his deployment was hardly completed before the enemy's cannon, opening with effect upon his left wing, compelled him to draw it back out of range. Then Lieutenant Waddington, of the Engineers, with two more officers, rode coolly close up to the centre of the Baluchi position and thence towards its right, drawing a heavy fusillade of matchlock-men and thus revealing the first ravine of the enemy's right centre, though not the second, nor the prolongation of their line beyond the wood on their left. Napier was still greatly in the dark as to what might lie before him, when a sudden movement of the enemy precipitated him into action.

Large bodies of the Baluchis were all at once observed hurrying from their left towards Dabo. Napier, supposing that they had neglected to occupy that village and were hastening to repair the blunder, decided that he would be beforehand with them, and set his troops in motion. Major Leslie's troop of horse-artillery, supported by the cavalry of the left wing, advanced first, diagonally, to gain the extreme right of the Baluchi line where it rested on the Fuleli, unlimbering and firing from time to time as it went forward. This movement caused the enemy to betray the whole length of their position, and Leslie was able to enfilade their hitherto concealed left wing from end to end.[1] The two remaining batteries likewise advanced in succession and took up raking positions to cross their fire with that of Leslie. Meanwhile the infantry also was on march in echelon of battalions from the left, the Twenty-second leading; and the Twenty-second's light company on the extreme left suffered heavily from the fire of matchlock-men and

[1] So says William Napier; but, if his account of the extent of the Baluchi line be correct, the range must have been very long for round shot, and impossible for grape. Possibly Leslie fired shrapnel, but for this he would need howitzers, and there was only one howitzer to each battery. I confess that I am puzzled by this detail.

from a single gun on a hillock midway between the two ravines. Napier was himself about to lead a charge of the infantry on his left, when a messenger galloped up to tell him that his cavalry on the right was charging. Stack, seeing numbers of Baluchis hurrying in apparent confusion from their left towards their centre, had concluded that they were smitten with panic, and that such an opportunity was not to be missed. Realising that his right flank was now uncovered, Napier committed the attack of the Twenty-second to Major Poole and spurred at the top of his speed to the other end of the line. 1843. Mar. 24.

There he could see Stack's horsemen galloping across the nullahs, shouting and waving their swords in mad career; and he knew at once with indignation that they had passed beyond his control. There was nothing to be done except to leave his right flank to chance; and racing back to the extreme left he overtook the Twenty-second on the brink of the first ravine, and called to them to charge. Without hesitation the men plunged down into the midst of the Baluchi swordsmen, and, seconded by Leslie's guns, made havoc of them with bullet and bayonet, till they drove them into the second ravine. The Twenty-fifth Native Infantry presently came into action on their right and the two forced their way across the second ravine and fell upon Dabo, which was strongly held. The cavalry and Leslie's battery worked their way round the village, partly in the bed of the Fuleli, partly in the track of the infantry, and cut it off; and the rest of the line of infantry, witnessing the victory of Stack's cavalry, swiftly crossed the two ravines, and, bringing up their right shoulders, surrounded the village completely. Napier, having forced his way through it, put himself at the head of the Bengal Cavalry and the Poona Horse, led the pursuit in person on his left wing and hunted the enemy for several miles; but on the right Colonel Patch arrested the chase just when the capture of the Lion in person seemed certain. This

1843. was unfortunate, though not perhaps unreasonable, for
Mar. 24. Stack's troopers had been galloping for about a couple of hours and must have been dispersed in all directions; and, though the Baluchi horse took to flight, the Baluchi swordsmen fought hard to the last. But for the escape of the hostile leader, the victory was sufficiently complete.

Such was the action which is generally known by the name of Hyderabad. The details are exceedingly obscure, but it should seem that the Baluchi left, which Napier so greatly dreaded, was unsteady from the very first. Apparently the British had hardly ranged themselves for battle before the enemy began to stream over from the left towards Dabo, and deluded Napier, pardonably enough, into his assault upon the enemy's right. This movement from their left continued, and Stack was probably correct in construing it as a panic. A host of mutually mistrustful tribes need only the withdrawal of one from the line of battle to make the remainder suspect treachery and withdraw likewise. It is even possible that by accident or design the Lion posted the clans from the west of the Indus as far as possible from the river, and that they, or some of them, became suspicious on that very account. It is in any case certain that, except on their extreme right, the resistance of the Baluchis was poor. Napier's casualties did not exceed two hundred and seventy of all ranks, of which number twenty-three killed and one hundred and thirty-nine wounded belonged to the Twenty-second; and the greater part of this loss was incurred in the storming of Dabo, which, as matters turned out, was quite unnecessary. Napier, rightly commending troops which had fought splendidly for him, attributed his success to the Twenty-second, and the artillery. The man who contributed most to it, as it should seem, was Stack, whom he blamed. Stack evidently swept away the Baluchi left, or such part of it as had not voluntarily decamped; and had Napier grasped this, he might have turned the Baluchi position by its left

with the infantry on his own right, come in upon the flank of the two ravines, cleared them and battered the houses of Dabo to pieces with his artillery. But setting aside such easy wisdom after the event, it is plain that the Baluchis did not fight as well at Hyderabad as at Miani, though their losses were at least twice as heavy. 1843. Mar. 24.

Halting for only eight hours after the battle, Napier moved eastward upon Mirpur, which surrendered on the 26th upon the appearance of the Poona Horse; the Lion having fled to Umarcot, sixty miles further to east. Dreading lest the inundation of the Indus should rise in his rear Napier kept his main force at Mirpur, and detached the Sind Horse and a camel battery to Umarcot, which defied them for a time, but on the flight of the Lion opened its gates on the 4th of April. There now remained to the fugitive chieftain one refuge, the fort of Shahgarh, in the desert, some sixty miles north-east of Imamgarh. To cut him off from this stronghold Napier posted a detachment at Rohri, and, to prevent his flight to the delta of the Indus, other troops were posted at Umarcot, Mirpur and Ali Ka Tanda. The heat was now intense and daily increasing, but none the less, in the course of the ensuing weeks, Napier drew his net closer and closer round. The marches were made, of course, by night, the men remaining by day in their tents, with wet cloths round their heads; but even so the deaths from heat-apoplexy were many. On the 14th of June Napier himself was struck down, though he quickly recovered, but at the same time thirty-three Europeans fell in quick succession near him, of whom every one died within three hours. On that same day the Lion made a last desperate attempt upon a column under Colonel Jacob, who beat him off without losing a man. The Lion fled with only ten followers; and the conquest of Sind was at last accomplished. April. June.

There can be no question but that this was a great military achievement and of the first importance in restoring the prestige of the British in India. It was

1843. possible only for a commander who had the strength and ability at once to take great risks, and yet, so far as possible, to leave nothing to chance. Napier was hampered from the very first by lack of transport. The inference that he drew from this fact was not that his task was impracticable, but that it must be achieved by such a force as his limited amount of carriage permitted him to take into the field. Meanwhile, his transport must be made to go as far as possible, first by cutting down baggage to the lowest possible amount, and secondly by attention to the proper care and nourishment of the animals. The former of these requirements was easily achieved through the signal example set by himself, most frugal and self-denying of men in the matter of physical comfort. The latter must have called for incessant personal watchfulness and activity. He speaks occasionally in his journal of the anxiety caused to him by his baggage, and of the small mortality among his camels; but of the means whereby he substituted good husbandry for the careless wastefulness which was the old tradition of the Indian Commissariat, he says little. Yet he did banish that evil tradition within a few weeks, and instilled a new and nobler spirit into all ranks of his little army, not merely by issuing orders, not merely by enforcing them ruthlessly when issued, but by sheer personal influence and personal inspiration. Charles Napier was a curious compound of vanity and modesty with strange alternations of self-exaltation and self-abasement, but he possessed a power of intuition which guided him to the heart of things. He saw facts as they were clearly, he reasoned from them logically, and, having once framed his decision, he abode by it with inflexible will and indomitable courage, feeling confidence in himself and filling all about him with that confidence. There were doubtless officers who dreaded the sudden appearance of that uncouth figure, who seemed to be everywhere and carried with him always a piercing eye and a very caustic tongue. But the young and the keen—and

there were not a few who would and did engage any number of enemies single-handed—welcomed his presence, for they felt that they could not do too much for him. Above all, the private soldier knew him as his friend; and it was no mere accident that made Charles Napier the first general to mention the names of private soldiers in his despatches. So, too, it was no mere coincidence that ten men of the Twenty-second, wounded at the battle of Hyderabad, concealed their hurts and marched off—one of them even with a bullet in his foot—with their regiment next day. It was the personality of Charles Napier which evoked this spirit. His fame rests upon the two actions which he fought in Sind; but their success was due less to any tactical skill than to the magic of his leadership. He had never before commanded more than a battalion in action, and his troops, for the most part, had never seen a shot fired in anger. The military atmosphere in India was heavy with the disaster and disgrace of Afghanistan; and yet this untried general and his untried troops never hesitated to march into a re-entrant angle or to the attack of a fierce enemy which outnumbered them by ten or fifteen to one. It is no ordinary commander who can perform such miracles. 1843.

Authorities: The classical authority for this campaign is Sir William Napier's *Conquest of Scinde*. But Dr. Rice Holmes had collected from many officers who took part in the two actions countless details unknown to William Napier. With great generosity he most kindly placed the whole of this material at my disposal, as well as the proofs of his own account of the campaign, since published in his own study of Charles Napier; and I wish to acknowledge my obligations to him with all possible gratitude.

CHAPTER XXXI

While the operations in Afghanistan and in Scinde were going forward, British troops had been engaged with a new enemy further to the east than they had ever yet penetrated. Commerce between the East India Company and China was of long standing; but, when the British Parliament in 1833 broke down the Company's monopoly of trade and threw it open to all adventurers, there came a great change. A company of merchants, having no great dignity to support, could condescend to humour Chinese prejudices and disarm them by bribery and other humble means, accepting petty affronts with patience; not so could traders with the fame of a mighty nation at their back. The Chinese on their side regarded all foreigners with equal contempt and refused to admit the first imperial commissioner, who was sent out from England to superintend the trade, to the city of Canton. This official, having been a naval officer, thereupon made his way up the river by force; and thus were fired the first shots between British and Chinese.

His successors conducted their business with more tact, but there was a new cause of contention between the two nations in the contraband trade in opium, which brought enormous profits to India. The Chinese government wished to exclude the drug altogether; the Chinese at large yearned for it; the British merchants were very eager to sell it; and the minor Chinese officials were very ready to admit it

upon receiving a share of the gains. But in January 1839. 1839, the Chinese government descended in earnest upon the British merchants in Canton, blockaded their factories and seized vast quantities of opium. There was much wrangling and negotiation, culminating in October in an attack by a Chinese flotilla upon two British frigates in the river, with the natural result that the Chinese were hopelessly worsted. The victory was not followed up; but early in 1840 Lord Auckland 1840. received orders from England to prepare a small expedition to uphold British honour and British claims in China. The question of the opium was merely an incident. The real point was whether, after two centuries of commercial intercourse, England was to be arrogantly and insultingly excluded from Chinese territory.

At the moment all seemed to be going prosperously at Kabul, and Lord Auckland, collecting the Eighteenth Regiment from Ceylon, the Twenty-sixth from Calcutta and the Forty-ninth, added to them a mixed battalion made up of ten volunteer companies from as many native regiments, two companies of the Royal Artillery and two companies of sappers and miners, with an establishment of engineers from Madras. The whole were embarked in twenty-six transports, which, with one line of battleship, six smaller men-of-war and two steamers of the Indian Navy, made for the general rendezvous at Singapore. By the beginning of May the armament was there assembled, May. and on the 30th sailed for the China seas. By the 21st of June they were off Macao, where the British community, expelled from Canton, had taken refuge; on the 28th it was proclaimed that the port and river of Canton were thenceforward under blockade; and on the 4th of July the expedition entered the harbour July. of Chusan. The Chinese authorities confessed their inability to make any defence, but declined to surrender the town of Tinghai; and it was necessary for the men-of-war to sink a few war-junks and disperse some

1840. July. bodies of soldiers ashore with their broadsides. The troops were then landed, and the Chinese made some show of resistance, but presently evacuated the town and left the British in possession. The men-of-war then sailed northward to the Gulf of Chihli, scattering along the coast as they went declarations of blockade and other futile documents, to which the Chinese paid no attention whatever. The naval officers did some useful work surveying harbours and rivers. There was a great deal of negotiation, in which the Chinese utterly befooled the British Commissioner, Captain Elliott of the Navy ; and in this ridiculous fashion the remainder of the year 1840 was thrown away. The blockade, which was intended to put pressure upon the Chinese government by distressing Chinese subjects, left that government utterly unmoved. The foreign barbarians were welcome to harass the common folk so long as they left those in high station alone. It was very plain that, if the British were to obtain redress for insult and injury, they must pursue measures of a very different kind.

Meanwhile the British troops at Chusan, subjected to great heat and fatigue, imperfectly sheltered, and fed upon salted, and often putrid provisions, were dying like flies from fever and dysentery. Within six weeks of landing at Tinghai the Twenty-sixth, a magnificent battalion over nine hundred strong, was reduced to a handful of debilitated men, their commanding officer being one of the first to perish. The white soldiers at Chusan numbered fewer than three thousand, but in the six months ending on the 31st of December 1840, the deaths among them numbered four hundred and fifty, and the admissions to hospital exceeded five hundred. An effort was made to save the invalids by sending them on a voyage to Manila, but the expedient

1841. proved to be fruitless. On New Year's Day, 1841, the Twenty-sixth could count only a bare hundred and ten men fit for duty; and this though the regiment's system of interior economy was notoriously excellent.

Here was one more proof, though additional evidence was quite superfluous, that military administration in India was utterly rotten. 1841.

However, by the first week in January Captain Elliott at last decided that something must be done. The fleet, reinforced by the *Nemesis*, an iron steamer and, as such, one of the marvels of the time, had been for some weeks lying off the mouth of the Boca Tigris, which is the passage in the river leading to the city of Canton; and the Chinese had been busily engaged in strengthening its defences. Every soldier who could stand was summoned from Chusan; and out of the European and native troops, now strengthened by the arrival of the Thirty-seventh Madras Native Infantry, it was possible, with the aid of the marines of the fleet, to embark a force of fourteen hundred rank and file upon three steamers. On the 7th of January the armament advanced up the river to the attack of the fort of Chuenpi; the troops, under Major Pratt of the Twenty-sixth, landing two miles below it, while five men-of-war stood up the stream to engage the Chinese batteries from the water. The works were carried at the first rush, and the Chinese were severely punished, some four hundred being killed. Meanwhile other vessels had engaged and captured a fort on the opposite shore, and the ships were preparing on the 8th to force the principal defence at the mouth of the Boca, when the Chinese authorities suggested an armistice, and Elliott, still untaught by experience, once more fell joyfully to negotiation. The British casualties in this affair were thirty-eight men wounded, many of them slightly, by an accidental explosion after they had entered the fort. From the fire of the Chinese they lost not a man. Jan.

On the 20th Elliott announced that the preliminaries of a treaty had been agreed upon, and the Chinese negotiators contrived to befool the simple man with false hopes for another month before he perceived that they were only working for delay in order to perfect

1841. the defences of the Boca. On the 25th of February,
Feb. therefore, hostilities were resumed by sea and land; and by the 27th the works had all been carried with considerable loss to the Chinese and practically none
March. to the British. On the 3rd of March Elliott again suspended operations at the behest of the Chinese diplomatists, but on the 6th he was once more obliged to resume them, and by the 18th the expedition had carried the last of the defences of Canton with trifling loss. On the 20th hostilities were once again ended, the Chinese Commissioner conceding that the port of Canton should be opened, that the ships of war should be allowed to remain in the neighbourhood of the British factories, and that due protection should be given to all lawful traders in the city.

Meanwhile on the 26th of February the British had occupied Hongkong, one of the more northerly of the islands in the Canton estuary, and there, on the 2nd of March, arrived Major-general Sir Hugh Gough, who had been sent from Madras in response to a request from the English negotiators for an officer of experience. Chusan being evacuated, in compliance with one of Elliott's many previous agreements with the Chinese, the troops were transferred from thence to Hongkong; where seven hundred recruits, which were following Gough, might do something to fill out their attenuated ranks. But there seemed to be no prospect of energetic operations. Auckland, utterly misconceiving the situation, recommended no more than attacks upon the shipping on the coast. Gough, with clearer vision, was for moving up first to Amoy, and then to the Yangtse Kiang, where the war-ships could ascend the river to Nanking, and the armament could really make its power felt. Elliott, with whom the decision lay, thought of nothing but trade and lived in a perpetual state of vacillation, now full of trust in the Chinese professions, now doubting whether he could avoid further recourse to arms. At the end of March Gough succeeded in persuading Elliott to

initiate operations at Amoy. At the end of April 1841.
Elliott was still of the same mind; a week later he was April.
for sending a naval force only to Amoy; and he was
still doubting and hesitating, when he suddenly realised
that the Chinese were pouring troops into Canton.
The Emperor had disgraced the Commissioner who
had come to terms with Elliott, and now called upon his
people to exterminate the foreigners. Frightened at
last into some semblance of resolution, Elliott, on the
21st of May, warned all foreigners to quit Canton May.
before nightfall. On that same evening the Chinese
made a futile attack upon the British war-vessels
with fire-craft, and the British retaliated by destroying
over seventy Chinese water-craft. It was now clear
that the first operation must be the capture of
Canton.

Gough and the naval commander, Sir Le Fleming Senhouse, after reconnaissance selected Tsingpu, on a creek about four miles to west of Canton, as the landing-place, since from thence there was direct access to a line of hills which commanded the north wall of the city. The city itself was of quadrate form, each wall being about fourteen hundred yards long. Inside it at the north-western angle rose a single fortified hill, dominating the entire enceinte, but itself dominated within cannon-shot by the heights to north of it. At the two extremities of the southern wall stood two forts upon islands in the river, that on the east being known as French Folly, and that on the west as Dutch Folly, both of which commanded the arsenal. On the heights to northward the Chinese had constructed four strong forts, mounting forty-four guns. It was reckoned that they had forty-five thousand troops on the spot. Gough had about two thousand five hundred soldiers of all ranks, to which Senhouse added a thousand seamen and marines. The whole were distributed into two columns, of which the right column was a mere detachment of about three hundred and sixty men, while the left was

1841. May. organised into four brigades, three of infantry and one of artillery.[1]

The disembarkation began at two o'clock in the afternoon of the 24th, Pratt's column landing first, and occupying the Dutch fort without resistance. The left column, which filled eighty boats in tow of the *Nemesis*, did not come up until evening, Gough having only time to make a short reconnaissance, with the Forty-ninth for escort, before nightfall. Throughout the hours of darkness the landing of artillery and stores

May 25. continued, and soon after dawn of the 25th the force advanced to the attack. The heights were rather less than four miles distant, the intervening ground being broken by paddy-fields; and on coming within range Gough halted his men under cover to await the arrival of his guns. In the hands of a resolute foe the Chinese position would have offered considerable tactical difficulties. The two western forts, which lay nearest to the British, stood just outside the north-western angle of the city, so that the approach to them was raked by the fire from the northern wall. The two eastern forts, more remote from them, lay about five hundred yards to the right rear of the first two, which thus flanked the access to them from the west. Without greatly troubling himself over tactical problems, Gough waited till the rocket-battery, four of his heavier guns and two mortars had come up, turned their fire upon the two western forts, and then directed the naval brigade to assault them, Morris's brigade to seize a

[1] *Right Column*: Major Pratt. H.M. 26th, 310 of all ranks, 60 artillery and sappers, with one 6-pr. field gun, and one 5½-inch mortar.

Left Column: Major-general Sir Hugh Gough.
1st Brigade: Maj.-gen. Barrell, H.M. 18th Royal Marines.
2nd „ Captain Bourchier. 2 battalions of seamen.
3rd „ Captain Knowles, R.A. Gunners and Sappers. 4 12-prs., 4 9-prs., 2 6-prs., 3 5½-inch mortars, 152 rockets.
4th „ Lt.-col. Morris, H.M. 49th, 37th Madras N.I., 1 Company Bengal Volunteers.

hill that lay midway between the two eastern forts, and Barrell's to cover the advance of Morris. The attack was launched at half-past nine, and by ten all four of the forts were in the hands of the British. 1841. May 25.

From the walls of the city, however, the Chinese poured a continuous shower of grape and bullets upon the British right, while a further menace was offered by some four thousand of the enemy in an entrenched camp a little to the east of the north-eastern angle of Canton. The only approach to this camp lay across a narrow causeway swept by fire from the walls, but the stronghold was carried by the Eighteenth and Forty-ninth; and therewith Gough closed his operations for the day, for the light was failing, the men were exhausted by the intense heat, and the next enterprise —the capture of the fortified height within the walls— could not be attempted until he could bring his heavier artillery into position.

Early in the morning of the 26th Pratt assaulted and took the French fort, and at ten o'clock the Chinese sent a flag of truce to propose negotiations. Gough declined to treat with any one of lesser rank than the Chinese general, who never came; and he then proceeded to get his guns into position. Heavy rain made an assault impracticable on that evening; but every preparation was made to deliver it on the morning of the 27th, when a message came from Elliott requesting that hostilities might be suspended, since he was again on the point of concluding a final arrangement. The military and naval commanders were furious, and justly so; for it was monstrous that the Commissioner should have intervened without consulting them. "You have placed me in a most critical situation," wrote Gough to him, with commendable restraint, "my men of all arms are dreadfully harassed, my communications with the rear constantly threatened and escorts attacked. My men must suffer dreadfully from the necessity of continued watchfulness; for, however you may put confidence in the Chinese, May 26. May 27.

1841. I do not, nor should I be justified in relaxing in the
May 27. least."

The day passed without further incident and the morrow likewise, the troops remaining in position before the walls until, in accordance with Elliott's treaty, the Chinese Imperial troops should evacuate Canton and an indemnity of six million dollars should
May 29. be paid. By noon of the 29th, however, the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages assembled with arms in force, and Gough was fain to detach a few companies to disperse them. The weather was intensely hot; one officer of the detachment died of sunstroke, and many men fell out through exhaustion; and, before the party could rejoin Gough's main body, a terrific thunderstorm burst upon them. The flint-lock muskets of the men became, as always, useless under the torrents of rain, and when the return movement began, the Chinese closed round the column and engaged it hand to hand. Owing to dense mist caused by the rain one company of Madras sepoys was cut off, and though it held its own for some hours manfully with the bayonet, would probably have been annihilated but for the timely arrival of some marines, armed with the new percussion-cap musket, whose volleys speedily scattered the pursuing enemy. The rest of the night
May 30. passed quietly, but on the morning of the 30th fresh hostile bodies were seen to be collecting on the hills, and Gough gave fair warning that, in the event of any further outbreak, he should resume his operations at once. The Chinese levies, however, dispersed at the order of one of their mandarins; and, since five out of six million dollars of indemnity had now been paid and seventeen thousand out of forty-five thousand Imperial troops had left Canton, Gough acceded to Elliott's request that he should withdraw. The whole force was accordingly re-embarked and brought back to Hongkong. Its casualties in all its actions did not exceed fourteen killed and ninety-one wounded. Had Gough's opponents possessed effective arms and been

trained never so little to the use of them, his operations would have been madness. Some nerve was necessary, even as things were, to place twenty-five hundred men in position with forty-five thousand soldiers in their front, and a city of a million inhabitants in their rear; but the British expect their generals to take these risks and only blame them for rashness if haply overtaken by disaster. 1841.

The return of the troops to Hongkong was marked by the usual reaction of rest after great exertion and much exposure. Fever and dysentery raged in both services, and at one time eleven hundred soldiers were in hospital. The navy suffered even more severely than the army, losing early in June its commander, Senhouse, an excellent officer who had worked most cordially with Gough. In July two severe typhoons greatly damaged both transports and men-of-war; and altogether the expedition, though Gough was anxious to proceed rapidly and energetically with active operations, was for two months practically unfit for further work. Elliott on his side continued his negotiations with protracted futility, the Chinese being quite ready to oblige him with an indefinite quantity of discussion, and so to gain time for improving their defences. July.

There were differences of opinion also as to the whole nature of the war. The expedition had been initiated not by the government of India, but by that of England. In Auckland's own words, it was a naval operation, undertaken by the Crown, to which the Governor-general had been required to furnish some assistance in the form of troops; and hence not only were the Indian authorities subordinate to the British, but the naval commander-in-chief was responsible for the entire plan of campaign. The position of both Admiral and General was difficult, though all obstacles had been so far overcome, and were to the end to be overcome, by the tact, good feeling and good sense of the individual officers. Auckland, for his part,

1841. July. naturally leaned to the view that the bulk of the work must be done by the navy, being a man of too small knowledge and imagination to realise the limitations of a naval force. He was, therefore, for directing the armament to the Pei Ho, so as to threaten directly the Chinese capital at Peking. In theory there seemed to be much in favour of this course; but in practice the case was very different. In the first place it was possible to block up the passages of the river, and in the second, though the fleet might knock the defences to pieces, it could not hold them to secure its retreat, nor capture and occupy the city. Only a military force could do that, and for such an operation Gough judged his force to be too weak, the more so since in the intense heat of the summer an army in the marshes of the Pei Ho would suffer terribly from sickness. He advocated, therefore, a descent upon the Yangtse Kiang, judging that if the British were once established there and in possession of Nanking, the Chinese government would be bound to make concessions in order to get rid of them. But even for this enterprise he judged that he would need more men; and meanwhile the only thing to be done was to occupy outlying stations not quite so remote from Peking as is Canton.

Towards the end of July there reached Gough the Fifty-fifth regiment from Calcutta, and a certain number of raw recruits, many of whom did not know one end of a musket from the other. These last he formed into a provisional battalion as a garrison for Hongkong; and meanwhile he improvised a corps of riflemen by drafting out a proportion of the most intelligent men and best marksmen of the British regiments and forming them into a distinct company under an officer of their own. At last, in the first Aug. week of August, arrived a new Commissioner, Sir Henry Pottinger, to supersede the useless and vacillating Elliott, and a new naval Commander-in-chief, Sir William Parker, a veteran who had fought in Lord

Howe's action of the 1st of June, and had been Nelson's best frigate-captain in the Mediterranean in 1805. Under their impulse the armament gathered new life. Gough, who for weeks had been chafing for action, embarked some twenty-seven hundred men, including the Fifty-fifth; and with two line of battle-ships, seven smaller vessels and four steamers, the armament, on the 21st of August, started from Hong-kong for Amoy, some three hundred miles to the north-east. 1841. Aug.

On the 25th it reached its destination and found the Chinese ready to offer resistance. Every island and every headland from which guns could be brought to bear upon the entrance to the harbour had been fortified and strongly occupied, and the entrance was flanked by a mile of solidly built granite rampart mounting ninety-six cannon. In the hands of efficient gunners the various batteries would have blown any fleet out of the water; but they were engaged by the British ships and carried by small parties of British troops, landed on their flank, with no difficulty and trifling loss, in the course of the 26th and 27th. The two line-of-battle ships fired each twelve thousand rounds at the granite rampart without producing the slightest effect; but it was swept clear from end to end by a handful of British soldiers, seamen and marines; and the casualties of the army and navy in the two days' fighting did not exceed two killed and fifteen wounded. Such engagements are not worth a detailed description.

Gough did his utmost to keep his troops from plundering Amoy and for two days with success; but the troops, realising that the town would be pillaged by a Chinese rabble as soon as their backs were turned, could not be restrained for longer. A garrison was left in the island of Kulangsu, which commanded the harbour, with three war-vessels to protect it, and the armament sailed next for Chusan, already taken once but abandoned under the fatuous

1841. Sept. counsel of Elliott. Here the Chinese preparations were not so far advanced; and the same policy of landing troops on the flank and rear of the batteries was adopted with success. The outer defences having been thus taken, the town of Tinghai was next carried by escalade, and the conquest of Chusan was complete. The Chinese at the outset showed more resolution than at Amoy, and Gough's casualties amounted to twenty-nine, of which two only were killed. The operations took up in all three days, from the 29th of September to the 1st of October; and, having left a small garrison to hold Tinghai, Parker and Gough proceeded next to the mouth of the Ningpo river, hoping that the capture of Chinhai, added to that of Amoy and Chusan, might produce some moral effect upon the Celestial government. Meanwhile Chusan afforded at least an useful base for future operations on the Yangtse Kiang.

Arriving before their destination the two commanders reconnoitred the river and found that the Chinese had, as usual, made formidable dispositions for defence. The stream itself, half a mile wide, was effectively blocked by piles and sunken junks; and these obstacles were commanded on the western or left bank by a precipitous rocky peninsula, strongly fortified, which adjoined the actual walls of Chinhai, and on the right bank by a line of irregular heights which had been converted into one chain of entrenched camps. It was agreed that the navy should deal with the western bank, while Gough, landing his troops in two columns on the east bank, directed one column to make a frontal attack and led the other round the enemy's left flank. The Chinese made some effort at resistance to the frontal attack, but gave way when they found that they were taken in rear. From twelve to fifteen hundred of them, about half the force, stood firm until their retreat was cut off, and were practically annihilated, though nearly five hundred were spared as prisoners. On the left bank, the Chinese were

driven from their shore-batteries by the fire from the ships, and, upon the accidental explosion of a magazine, abandoned the defence of the rocky hill altogether. Parker then led his seamen and marines to the escalade of the walls of Chinhai, twenty-six feet high, and was very quickly master of the town. His losses amounted to one man, accidentally killed, and Gough's to three men killed and sixteen wounded. Ningpo itself surrendered without resistance on the 12th, and therewith the operations came to an end, three-quarters of Gough's force having been swallowed up by garrisons for the captured places. Sir Hugh was strongly against the occupation of Ningpo, for the obvious reason that his force was thereby excessively dispersed; but he was overborne by Parker and Pottinger; and at Ningpo accordingly he fixed his winter quarters. 1841. Oct. Oct. 12.

Notwithstanding severe cold the troops remained healthy, and, though early in March 1842, the Chinese made attempts to recover both Ningpo and Chinhai, they were repulsed with such terrible slaughter by the British grape and musketry that they did not repeat the experiment. Gough, who was at the time at Chusan concerting arrangements for the next campaign with Parker, thereupon hurried back to Ningpo to hunt the enemy away, and on the 15th he embarked nine hundred troops in the men-of-war and proceeded with them a few miles up the river towards Tzeki. Landing four miles from the town, Gough presently discovered the enemy drawn up, about eight thousand strong, on some heights behind it. Their position was a bad one, for there was an unoccupied peak which commanded the Chinese left, which again dominated their right and centre. Advancing in three columns Gough took prompt advantage of the enemy's tactical defects and drove them off with very heavy loss. So quickly were they dislodged indeed, that a column which had been sent round to cut off their retreat arrived too late. The loss of the British was, as usual, trifling, though the proportion of officers 1842.

1842. March. among the casualties was great; there being seven of them to fifteen men in the army, and four to fifteen in the naval brigade. The reason was that, as always, there were some brave Chinese who stood firm and engaged the officers hand to hand before the men came up.

The Chinese tents and supplies gave excellent shelter and victuals to the British for the night, and on the 16th Gough advanced for another seven miles to another position which had been strongly fortified by the enemy. This, however, was found to be deserted; and Gough, being unable to obtain information of the Chinese movements, returned on the 17th to Ningpo.

The campaigning season was now opening in earnest, and Gough was considerably embarrassed as to his next move. Despite of the General's protest against operations on the Pei Ho, the last orders received from Auckland had prescribed an advance upon Peking by that river; and Gough, while dutifully accepting them, had pleaded that he must at least be strengthened by reinforcements. Not a man, however, arrived; and Gough, dreading the effects of a campaign during the heat of summer, made arrangements for withdrawing all garrisons, except from Hongkong, Kulangsu, Chusan and Chinhai, and proceeding with every man that he could raise to the Yangtse Kiang, capturing Nanking, and then, when his reinforcements should have arrived, going on to the Pei Ho. On the 6th of March, however, arrived a letter from Lord Ellenborough leaving the choice of operations wholly to the Commander-in-chief. Herein Ellenborough took the very bold step of overruling the Duke of Wellington. The Duke, in the autumn of 1841, had approved the project of operations in the Yangtse Kiang, but had changed his mind after a conversation with Admiral Sir George Cockburn, who had represented that there was a convenient anchorage at the mouth of the Pei Ho, and that vessels of light draught

could ascend the river. What the Duke had forgotten, or Cockburn had omitted to mention, was that the banks of the Pei Ho are higher than the surrounding country, and that the Chinese by cutting through them could indefinitely lower the depth of the main stream. There was thus the danger lest the communication by water could be cut off, and the land forces, with possibly a portion of the fleet also, should be left high and dry in the midst of countless enemies. Thinking the matter over, Ellenborough, on the 23rd of March, specifically forbade operations on the Pei Ho; and Gough was at liberty to pursue his own enterprise on the Yangtse Kiang. 1842. March.

In order to secure the safety of such small garrisons as were to be left in the captured towns, it was necessary first to disperse a large Chinese force which had been assembled near the town of Chapu, the port of Hangchow. On the 7th of May Gough evacuated Ningpo and (with the exception of a single strong point) Chinhai, re-embarking the troops; and the whole fleet stood to westward, making for Chapu. The distance was but sixty miles, but, owing to contrary winds, treacherous currents and generally dangerous navigation, the voyage occupied nine days. On the 16th the armament cast anchor off Chapu, and on the same evening Gough and Sir William Parker, after reconnaissance, agreed upon their plan of attack. The Chinese, about eight thousand strong, occupied a line of fortified heights, about a mile and a half in extent from east to west, facing southward towards the shore, with their left resting on the sea, where the coast took a trend northward, and their right on the walled city of Chapu. As usual they looked for none but a frontal attack, wherefore the Admiral distracted their attention by the fire of eight ships, while Gough landed his troops, about twenty-two hundred of all ranks, on the extreme left of the position. He then divided it into three columns, the right, under Lieutenant-colonel Morris, to pass round the northern side of the heights May. May 18.

1842. and cut off the enemy's retreat on that side, the left
May 18. under Lieutenant-colonel Schoedde to clear the heights themselves, and the centre, composed chiefly of artillery, under Lieutenant-colonel Montgomerie, to maintain communication between the two.[1] As these advanced, the enemy gave way at once, and, being intercepted, suffered very heavily. But a little party of three hundred Tartars, having ensconced themselves in a joss-house, defended themselves with the greatest gallantry; and many lives were unnecessarily thrown away by ill-considered attacks of small parties, until a rocket-battery at last came up, when Captain Pears, of the Royal Engineers, with great daring fired a petard of fifty pounds of powder against the foot of the wall and so blew up a large breach. But even then the Tartars repulsed another assault, and it was not until the building had been set on fire and the defendants had been reduced to a handful by the fire of rockets, guns and musketry, that the joss-house, after a defence of three hours, was at last taken. The casualties of the British amounted to sixty-five, including eight officers, killed and wounded. Those of the enemy were reckoned at twelve to fifteen hundred. The whole affair lasted about four hours, and by noon Gough was in possession of Chapu.

After destroying the arsenals, securing the ordnance and taking measures for the protection of private
May 27. property, Gough, on the 27th, evacuated Chapu and, re-embarking his troops, sailed with the Admiral to the mouth of the Yangtse Kiang. The distance was but one hundred miles, but the fleet had once again to feel its way over every yard, and it was not until
June 13. the 13th of June that the armament finally anchored

[1] *Right Column*: H.M. 18th, 492, and 49th, 451; sappers, 26; total 969.
Centre Column: R.A., 37; Madras Artillery, 172; sappers, 76; Rifle Co., 36th Madras N.I., 103; total 388.
Left Column: H.M. 26th, 548, and 55th, 289; sappers, 26; total 863.

off Wusang, on the southern bank of the river. The 14th and 15th were spent by the naval officers in taking soundings and buoying out an anchorage for the men-of-war, all under the muzzles of the Chinese guns, which never opened fire, though the gunners were vociferous with abuse and derision. On the 16th the squadron attacked, and the enemy were driven from their batteries by landing-parties of seamen and marines before the steamers could tow up the transports with the troops. The casualties on both sides were trifling, between twenty and thirty; and the chief point of the operation was that it opened the way to Shanghai. By noon the troops were disembarked, and marched up the river to Paoushan, which was found to be abandoned by the enemy. 1842. June 16.

On that evening transports with twenty-five hundred men [1] arrived from India, but Gough landed only one regiment, the Second Madras Native Infantry, and, distributing the troops into two divisions on the 19th, sent one to march by land by the left bank of the river upon Shanghai, while the other proceeded on steamers by water. Neither met with any serious resistance. Shanghai was occupied without difficulty, the enemy having withdrawn all troops from it; and on the 23rd Gough brought his whole force, some nine thousand men, half by land half by water to Wusang. Here he reorganised his force into three brigades,[2] and prepared for the decisive advance upon Nanking. June 19. June 23.

The heaviest of the work lay with the Admiral,

[1] H.M. 98th; 2nd, 6th, 14th, 39th, 41st Madras N.I. Major-general Lord Saltoun in command.

[2] *1st Brigade*: Maj.-gen. Lord Saltoun. H.M. 26th and 98th; Bengal Volunteers; flank cos. 41st Madras N.I., 83 officers, 2235 men.

2nd Brigade: Maj.-gen. Schoedde. H.M. 55th; 2nd and 6th M.N.I.; rifle co. of 36th M.N.I., 60 officers, 1772 rank and file.

3rd Brigade: Maj.-gen. Bartley. H.M. 18th and 49th; 14th M.N.I., 68 officers, 2087 men.

Artillery: Colonel Montgomerie. R.A., 26 officers, 318 men; Madras, 6 officers, 252 men.

1842. who was required to take twenty-six armed vessels, only nine of them steamers, and forty transports up some two hundred miles of uncharted and unknown river. Two surveying vessels were sent ahead on
July. the 29th of June, and on the 6th of July the entire armament got under way and stood up the stream with a fair wind. But for a few mishaps of ships taking the ground all went well, and on the 19th the fleet came to anchor abreast of Chinkiang-Fu, the enemy having fired only a few harmless shots during the whole of the difficult passage. Chinkiang-Fu was the gate not only of the Yangtse Kiang, but of the principal canals leading inland; and the possession of it, with the closing of the navigation, was a step that might bring the Celestial government to reason. Gough and the Admiral going ahead of the squadron in a steamer had already, on the 16th, made their reconnaissances; and, by the time that the entire armament was assembled, they were ready with their plan of operations.

On the 20th a clumsy attempt was made by the Chinese to float fire-rafts down upon the British ships, and was easily foiled; but in the city of Chinkiang-Fu there was no sign of life. Standing on the south bank of the great river, a parallelogram of about a mile square, it was so strangely silent that it seemed to be deserted, and only on some hills a mile to the south-west could be seen two entrenched camps large enough to contain a considerable force. On the morning of
July 21. the 21st Gough landed his troops, Schoedde's brigade opposite to the south-eastern angle of the town, and Bartley's brigade about a mile to the west of the south-western angle. The disembarkation seems to have been irregularly conducted, some troops reaching the shore soon after midnight, while two or three whole battalions did not make their appearance until the business of the day was over. It should seem that the naval arrangements were defective;[1] and an

[1] See Ochterlony, pp. 349-350.

enterprising enemy might have made the British commanders pay dearly for their slovenliness. But the Chinese attempted neither to oppose nor even to hinder the landing; and by seven o'clock in the morning the greater number of the troops were ready to Gough's hand. 1842. July 21.

He then ordered Saltoun to advance upon the two entrenched camps, and Schoedde to make a demonstration against the town, while Bartley's brigade, strengthened by the Twenty-sixth, which had been detached from Saltoun, was held in reserve in the western suburbs. It was eight o'clock before the columns moved off, and the troops were soon in distress under the extreme heat of the sun. As Saltoun approached the Chinese position, it was found that the enemy had forsaken their camps and were drawn up in a single dense body behind an entrenchment at the summit of a gentle slope. Saltoun made his dispositions to hold them in front with three light field-guns, and to turn both of their flanks with his infantry; but the enemy, after a single irregular volley of all arms, broke up and dispersed. Pursuit was hopeless, and Saltoun was fain to halt and await orders, while his men fell down fast under the terrific rays of the sun. Schoedde, meanwhile, having observed the effect of Saltoun's advance and being provided with scaling-ladders, resolved to carry the town by escalade, taking the grenadier company of the Fifty-fifth as the storming party, and detailing sharp-shooters to keep down the fire from the walls. The grenadiers easily made their way to the top of the wall, and the assaulting column, obedient to orders, then parted right and left to clear the ramparts. The defenders at first gave way in panic, but some Tartars, rallying, made a stubborn resistance on the left and were only by hard fighting pressed back beyond the nearest gate, which was then thrown open for the admittance of the Second Madras Native Infantry. On the right likewise a party of brave men took advantage of a two-storied guard-house to maintain for a time a resolute defence; and the

1842. accidental explosion of a dead soldier's cartridge-box
July 21. gave rise to the old cry of "a mine," and to a panic, for the time, among the assailants. Driven at length from this vantage-point, the Tartars fell back to another, and were still fighting resolutely at noon when Bartley's brigade, which had been delayed by the straying of the boats that carried its artillery, at last blew in the western gate. Then the Eighteenth and Forty-ninth, after a short but sharp struggle, trampled out the last remains of organised resistance; and, as night fell, the town was in possession of the British.

This, the heaviest engagement in the course of the war, cost Gough one hundred and forty-four casualties, an appreciable proportion of them due to the intense heat. Thirteen men of the Ninety-eighth alone died of fatigue or sunstroke before evening, and many, both officers and soldiers, were for the time disabled. Had there been any fighting spirit in the troops who were attacked by Saltoun, or any skill in directing the handful of really brave men—they appear not to have exceeded two thousand—who opposed Schoedde and Bartley, the attack might have failed disastrously, or, if successful, must have proved very costly. The disembarkation was effected, as has been seen, in driblets. One lot of boats, containing troops, finding no officer to guide them to the landing-place, sought the flagship to ask for information and obtained no answer, except a rebuke for moving without the Admiral's orders and a command to return to the transport to await them. Again, as already mentioned, two boats containing four pieces of artillery belonging to Bartley's brigade, either received no instructions or failed to understand such as they did receive, for they went on a little expedition of their own into the Grand Canal, which washed the western wall of the city, and found themselves under heavy and destructive fire. Unable to reply to it, the gunners abandoned the boats and guns, and made their escape by land; and it was only through Chinese lack of enterprise that the craft with

their contents did not fall into the enemy's hands. Who was responsible for all these blunders, whether the staff of the navy or of the army, or of both, is uncertain, but they do not point to good management on the part of either. 1842. July 21

However, as things were, no harm was done. There were confused combats between small parties all through the night, and, when dawn came, it was found that the city had been devastated by the Chinese rabble, and that the survivors of the defending force had destroyed their wives, their children, and finally themselves. The body of their general was found half consumed upon a funeral pile which he had laid and kindled himself. Altogether the whole aspect of the city was beyond description hideous, and the stench of the unburied corpses under the burning sun most horrible. Gough withdrew his troops as soon as possible to the neighbouring heights, but not before some had fallen victims to cholera. Meanwhile the fleet busied itself with the arduous task of blockading the Imperial Canal and cutting off communication by water with Peking; and on the 29th Gough re-embarked his troops, being anxious to advance to Nanking while their health still permitted them to keep the field. Major-general Schoedde was left with a small garrison on some heights which commanded the city and the mouth of the canal; and, after much delay through contrary winds, the armament anchored before Nanking on the 9th of August. Gough, together with the Admiral, went ahead and laid plans for the attack; but on the 12th Commissioners arrived from Peking to negotiate for peace, and, though they dallied for some days in the hope of gaining time, they yielded to Gough's peremptory threat that he would take the offensive without fail on the 15th. On the 17th accordingly hostilities were suspended, and on the 29th a treaty was signed whereby China agreed to pay England an indemnity of twenty-one million dollars, to cede to her Hongkong, to recognise her representatives on equal terms, and July 22. July 29. Aug. Aug. 29.

1842. Aug. to throw open to foreign trade the marts of Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo and Shanghai. Troops were retained at Chusan and Kulangsu to ensure the fulfilment of the terms, and in December the expeditionary force was finally broken up.

The miserable resistance offered by the Chinese, and the practical certainty of success, however the British force might be handled, makes the first Chinese campaign tedious and tiresome to follow. Yet the Duke of Wellington, in reviewing the operations in Parliament, was justly entitled to call them extraordinary, and without a parallel as the joint work of fleet and army. The military enterprises of an insular power such as is England must all of them, from the nature of the case, be what is called amphibious; but their nature necessarily varies very greatly. Sometimes the part of the fleet is confined to the mere escorting of the troops to their landing-place, and the securing of their line of communication. Sometimes it must take a more active part to force a disembarkation, as at Aboukir and Mauritius, and to second operations ashore by its fire, as at Louisburg, Helder, many times in the West Indies, and in 1915 at the Dardanelles. Again the movements of the fleet may be used for the distraction of the enemy's land-forces ashore, the finest example of this being the drifting of Saunders's ships up and down the St. Lawrence in 1759. Occasionally premature aggression by the fleet may commit the army to unfavourable operations as at New Orleans in 1814 and the Dardanelles in 1915. But the combined action of fleet and army in perfect concert as a single and indivisible force, each putting forth its powers to the utmost for the help of the other and for the furtherance of a common object, is not so usual as perhaps it should be. The reason is that, though goodwill between naval and military commanders is fairly frequent, perfect understanding by each of the functions and limitations of the other's force is far too rare. Even rarer, it should seem, is such perfect

understanding between the heads of the two services, the Admiralty and the War Office.[1] Great things have been done by isolated pairs of commanders, notably by Commodore Moore and General Barrington against Guadeloupe in March 1759, by Saunders and Wolfe in Canada in the same year, by Admiral Barrington and Grant—a wonderful example—in 1778, and by Jervis and Grey at Martinique and Guadeloupe in 1794. But it is lamentable to contrast with these the vanity, jealousy and incompetence of Sydney Smith and John Stuart in 1806. Had Jervis and Charles Stuart stood in place of these two impostors, they would have broken the power of Napoleon long before 1814. But the instinct of co-operation and the knowledge of all that may be effected by turning the joint work of fleet and army to the best account, had not been instilled into either service from the highest quarter. 1842.

It seems to have been the revelation of amphibious power, if the expression may be permitted, that struck Wellington in this first Chinese War. He himself in Spain had asked little of the navy, except to keep his communications with England open; and he had shown extreme impatience over the slightest menace to those communications. But, in the case of these Chinese operations, an admiral and a general had been bidden to sail to unknown seas with practically no instructions except to bend a great oriental potentate to the will of England; and they had done it. There had been a precedent for landings at many remote points on a great range of coast in the two wars against America; the bases in the former of these wars being Halifax and, after 1776, New York, and in the latter

[1] Thus during the German War it was open to us to concentrate a large military force in Egypt and a large naval force, with transports, in Egyptian waters. Commanding the Suez Canal, as we did, we should then have threatened the entire coast of the Turkish Empire from Constantinople to El Arish on the Mediterranean side, and along the Red Sea, the Arabian Sea, and the Persian Gulf on the other. And Egypt was midway between our two main military bases, England and India. It is hard to maintain that we made the best possible use of it.

1842. Halifax and Jamaica. But the Atlantic coast had been familiar to English navigators for a century, and, considering the period, had been extremely well surveyed. The China seas were little known and little charted; the navigation was very difficult, and the advanced base for the operations had to be seized and held. Much time and expense and many lives were sacrificed while the authorities in India fumbled for the right point at which to strike; and it is to Gough's credit that he was the first to indicate the vital spot. In the end the requisite object was attained; but this result was due wholly to the incompetence of the Chinese leaders and the bad quality of their troops. There were very brave men among them; and, had there been everywhere opposed to Gough even a few hundred resolute fighters under commanders of some slight military instinct, they might have made Gough's task both difficult and costly. Had the few hundreds been increased to a few thousands, they would have foiled the British altogether, quite possibly with disaster and disgrace. The story of the expedition is wearisome in the extreme, because any plans and dispositions sufficed for an enemy who never resisted. The greatest liberties could be taken without danger, and the most flagrant mistakes might remain unpunished. Hence there is an air of unreality about the operations; and, though they must be chronicled, lest the history of the army should be incomplete, they offer little to increase the knowledge or to widen the experience of the military student. The hardest of the work, namely the navigation of the ships off an ill-known coast and in unknown rivers, fell upon the navy, which accomplished it, in accordance with its great traditions, as a matter of course. The later fame of James Cook recalls to us the fact that he took the armament of Saunders and Wolfe up the St. Lawrence to Quebec, but no one gives a thought to the forgotten masters and masters' mates who were the real heroes of the first Chinese War.

CHAPTER XXXII

After the conclusion of the operations in China Gough returned by way of Calcutta to Madras, from whence he prepared to return to England. The chief command at Madras had actually been given to him, but had been withdrawn, since the government had decided that the functions of Governor and Commander-in-chief should be united in a single person. He was, however, compensated in May by his appointment to be Commander-in-chief in India upon the retirement of Sir Jasper Nicolls; and to him, therefore, it fell to deal, apart from Scinde, with the aftermath of troubles which followed upon the Afghan War. 1843

The first of these arose in the dominions of the Mahratta Chief, Scindia of Gwalior, upon the death of the Maharajah Jankoji Rao Scindia in February 1843. Jankoji, a worthless character, left no heir; and his widow, the Rani Tara Bai, a girl of twelve, adopted a boy, four years younger than herself, who was nearest in blood to Jankoji, as his successor. Meanwhile an uncle of Jankoji, known as Mama Sahib, was chosen as regent; and the Governor-general, Ellenborough, signifying his approval of all these proceedings, declared himself prepared to support Mama Sahib's authority. Thereby, not unconsciously, he committed himself to, at least, the possibility of armed intervention. It was rare for one oriental ruler to succeed another without disturbance of some kind, and in this case the danger of trouble was aggravated by the fact that Scindia's army was in arrears of pay, and a part of it at least in open mutiny.

1843. For a few weeks all was quiet at Gwalior, and then, as usual, began intrigues of court and harem. A faction arose under the leadership of a late minister of the deceased Jankoji, one Dhada Khasji; and the Rani, from whatever cause, threw her influence on his side and gave him money to pay the mutinous troops. With the army at his back Dhada, after considerable riot and bloodshed, forced Mama Sahib to fly from Gwalior, and by the end of May reigned practically supreme. He then restored to office sundry persons who had been displaced by Jankoji on the representation of the Indian government, on account of their hostility to the British, and finally ordered the British Resident to remove from Gwalior to Dholpur, north of the Chambal, outside Scindia's dominions.

Ellenborough, who had moved up to Agra in the spring so as to be near at hand in case of trouble,
Aug. decided in the middle of August to form an army of observation, twelve thousand strong, at that place, and summoned Gough to move up to Cawnpore. In September complications in the Punjab necessitated the strengthening of the British troops on the Sikh frontier, and diverted the attention of the Commander-in-chief to that quarter; but in October he formed his plan of campaign in the event of further trouble at Gwalior. Deliberately and of set purpose defying the rules of strategy, he decided to divide his force, about twenty thousand men in all, into two parts, of which the right wing under his own command should move southward upon Gwalior from Agra, and the left wing, under Sir John Grey, north-westward from Bundelkhand. The hostile army was reckoned at twenty-two thousand good troops, trained in the past by European officers (though none of these were now present), with three hundred guns; but the political officers, upon whom, as usual, sole dependence was placed for information, reported that this host was no more than a leaderless mob, whose heads were at vari-

ance with each other. In the circumstances Gough decided that either wing would suffice to overthrow any force that might encounter it, and that the approach of both from opposite directions would prevent the enemy from dispersing, after defeat, into gangs of banditti. The experience of Hastings in 1819 hardly confirmed this latter anticipation; but Gough was at least justified by the event. 1843.

By the beginning of December the right wing was assembling at Agra, and Gough had established a bridge of boats at Dholpur for the maintenance of his communications across the Chambal. The left wing was parted into two divisions at Kunch, about seventy miles east of Gwalior, and at Jhansi, about fifty miles south and west of Kunch, which two were to unite for the passage of the Sind at Seondha. But hostilities had not yet begun, nor seemed likely to begin. A counter-revolution at Gwalior in November had resulted in the fall and imprisonment of Dhada Khasji; and all that remained was that he should be delivered into the hands of the British. Ellenborough arrived at Agra on the 11th of December, and gave orders for the two wings to advance upon the Chambal and the Sind; Gough's force being timed to be ready to cross at Dholpur on the 22nd, and Grey's two brigades to unite at Seondha on the same day. The threatening movement fulfilled its purpose, and on the 18th Dhada Khasji was surrendered into Ellenborough's hands. The Governor-general then thought fit to require the reduction of the Gwalior army, and as a means to that end ordered a further advance. He gave out, no doubt in good faith, that his object was the maintenance of peace, and he had no misgivings that the march would be more than a military promenade. On the 22nd accordingly the right wing crossed the Chambal, and on the 24th the left wing crossed the Sind. By the 25th Grey had moved one day's march within Scindia's territory, and Gough was near Hingona, on the Kunwari river. Ellenborough was Dec.

1843. with him, awaiting a visit from the Rani of Gwalior
Dec. 25. on the morrow, and so confident of a peaceful issue that he had invited Lady Gough and her daughter to dine with him at Hingona. Another lady, familiar with active service, Mrs. Harry Smith, was also of the party; and there was eating and drinking on that Christmas Day.

But merriment there was not, for news came in that the Rani, whether by her own will, or through constraint of her troops, would not meet the Governor-general, but that, on the contrary, a large force, with artillery, had marched out from Gwalior some eleven miles north-westward on the road to Dholpur. Plainly this signified war, and Gough therefore sent his final instructions to Grey, namely, that he should avoid the dangerous defile of Antri, on the direct road from Jhansi to Gwalior, turn westward till he struck the road leading from Narwar to the same capital, and follow it to Panniar. Gough reckoned that Grey should reach Panniar by the 30th, and ordered a detachment which lay at Sipri, some twenty miles south-west of Narwar, to join him there. Further co-operation between the two main forces of the British must depend upon circumstances; but it was evident that Gough must fight his way to Grey, for on the 26th it was known that the enemy had advanced seven miles further on the road to Dholpur, and had taken up a strong position at Chonda on the river Asan.

Gough at once sent out staff officers to reconnoitre this position, and Harry Smith, accompanying them
Dec. 28. on the 28th, drew up his report. Its purport was that the Mahrattas appeared to be about ten thousand strong, with several guns; that they were posted on difficult ground, with their left on the Asan and their right unprotected, as if they looked for the arrival of more troops; that the British ought to move up over against them without delay, and either await Grey's co-operation or attack them on the following morning.

Gough decided upon immediate attack, and on the evening of the 28th issued his orders accordingly. 1843. Dec. 28.

The distance to be traversed was about eight miles, beginning with the passage of the Kunwari river, and continuing over very rough and difficult country, much intersected by deep ravines, which were only made practicable by the work of the sappers. Gough had in all one British regiment of cavalry—the Sixteenth Lancers—four native regiments, and three troops of horse-artillery, two British battalions, the Thirty-ninth and Fortieth, six native battalions, and two light field-batteries; in all about thirteen hundred and fifty horse, about four thousand eight hundred foot, and three hundred and fifty artillery with thirty light guns. These he distributed into three columns. The right column, under Major-general Sir Joseph Thackwell, consisted of the Sixteenth Lancers, the Governor-general's bodyguard, and two regiments of native cavalry; the centre column, under Major-general Valiant, of the Fortieth, and two native battalions; and the left column of the remainder of the force under Gough himself.[1] His plan was to fall upon and turn the enemy's left flank with Thackwell's and Valiant's columns, while Littler's column should assail the front.

The left column started half an hour before dawn of the 29th, and the two remaining columns at day- Dec. 29. break; and, notwithstanding the extreme intricacy of the ground, all three reached their appointed stations with remarkable precision. Littler's troops, under Gough's own directions, were the first to arrive, and

[1] *Right Column*: Thackwell. Cureton's brigade: 16th Lancers, Gov.-gen.'s bodyguard, 1st Bengal L.C., 4th Irregular Cav., Lane's and Alexander's troops of Horse Artillery.
Central Column: Valiant. H.M. 40th, 2nd and 16th Bengal N.I.
Left Column: Dennis's Infantry Div.; 14th, 31st and 43rd N.I., Browne's Light Field Battery.
Littler's Infantry Div.; H.M. 39th; 56th N.I., Saunders's Light Field Battery.
Scott's Cavalry Brigade; 4th and 10th Bengal L.C., Grant's troop H.A.

1843. halted about a mile from Maharajpur. Harry Smith
Dec. 29. had ridden through this village on the previous day; but it was now found that the enemy had advanced and entrenched it, occupying it both with infantry and artillery, which latter opened a desultory and harmless fire at extreme range. For an hour Gough, with a single staff officer, walked up and down within three hundred yards of the Mahratta sentries, making such observation as he could; but the plain was covered with high crops of corn which obstructed all view, and there was not so much as a mound to facilitate reconnaissance. One thing, however, seemed to be clear. The Mahratta force in Maharajpur were beyond supporting distance of their main position at Chonda, which was a mile and a half in rear, and might therefore be isolated and overwhelmed. Gough sent for the four eight-inch howitzers, which were the only heavy pieces that he had been able to bring with him, and at half-past eight opened his attack upon Maharajpur.

Grant's troop of horse-artillery was the first to gallop to the front and engage the Mahratta guns on the left of the village. Alexander's troop joined him, and, though weight of metal was against them and the enemy's artillerymen showed both skill and resolution, the two advanced to within five hundred yards' range and silenced the hostile batteries, which were presently stormed by Valiant's brigade. Meanwhile Scott's cavalry had repulsed an advance of the Mahratta horse on the extreme left, and Littler's infantry, further to the right, was deploying within four hundred yards of the village under a heavy fire of round shot. The Fifty-sixth Native Infantry wavered for a moment until urged forward by Gough himself, but the Thirty-ninth never hesitated. As the redcoats drew nearer the Mahratta artillery poured in a shower of grape and canister, and finally, as their ammunition failed, of horse-shoes and any scraps of iron that they could find, like the French at Fontenoy. Their gallant efforts were fruitless. The British made a final spring

upon the guns, bayoneting the gunners, who stood nobly by their pieces to the last, and then engaged the Mahratta infantry in the rear. These too fought well; but by this time Valiant's success had made itself felt. Within half an hour of the outset of the attack Maharajpur was in flames, every gun had been captured, and the force defending it had been practically destroyed. A few fugitives only, flying to their right instead of to their rear, took refuge in the village of Shirkapore, about a mile distant. It should seem that the Mahratta leaders had not only posted a detachment too far in front of their main position, but had repeated Tallard's blunder at Blenheim of occupying two villages too far apart to maintain a cross fire of artillery. 1843. Dec. 29.

Thus the first stage of the fight had been successfully carried out, and that before the heavy howitzers had had time to come into action. It remained to deal with Shirkapore, which was strongly entrenched, and with the main position at Chonda. Little, it seems, could be seen of either, and, in fact, the Mahratta guns were so well concealed that even from the saddle only their muzzles could be perceived. However, Valiant was now directed to pass round Littler's rear, fall upon Shirkapore, and, having mastered it, to attack the Mahratta right of the main position, while Littler, supported by a regiment of light cavalry, should advance upon the front and Thackwell should manœuvre round the Mahratta left to cut off their retreat. Once again the Mahratta gunners did their duty with desperate courage. Valiant had to carry three entrenched positions one after another; and two successive commanding officers of the Fortieth fell wounded before the very muzzles of the guns before the batteries were captured. On the main position Grant again galloped to the front, and for more than half an hour engaged with his single troop a heavy battery of twelve cannon, which punished him severely. More than once he drove the enemy from their pieces, but, having no further support than a weak escort of cavalry, was

1843. Dec. 29. unable to take advantage of his success or to prevent the Mahratta gunners from reopening fire. However, Littler's infantry, headed by the Thirty-ninth, carried all before them and rolled up the Mahratta line from its right to its left. The battle ended with the capture of a small work mounting four guns on the extreme Mahratta left, which was carried by the Grenadiers of the Thirty-ninth with a wing of the Fifty-sixth Native Infantry in support. Thackwell's cavalry, being checked by an impassable ravine, was unable to pursue effectively; but the Mahrattas had been sufficiently well beaten, with the loss of fifty-six guns and of all their ammunition-waggons. As a fighting force they had ceased to exist.

Gough's casualties in this affair fell just short of eight hundred, almost exactly half of which number fell upon the Thirty-ninth and Fortieth alone, the former counting two hundred and fourteen and the latter one hundred and sixty-two of all ranks killed and wounded. Reckoning the loss of the European artillery and of the British officers in native regiments, considerably less than one-half of the fallen were natives of India. The Sixteenth Bengal Grenadiers, with one hundred and seventy-nine casualties, alone bore their full share of the engagement, and behaved remarkably well; but the five remaining native battalions evidently contributed little to the work of the day. Indeed Harry Smith, who was present, says plainly that but for the Thirty-ninth and Fortieth, the Mahratta resistance would not have been overcome —not, at any rate, as the battle was actually fought.

Details are so scanty, and our knowledge of the Mahratta position so imperfect, that it is difficult to form a judgement upon Gough's tactical handling of the action. It is, however, certain that the country immediately before the enemy's entrenchments was so blind that Gough was as much in the dark about them, until he came to close quarters, as was Napier at Miani and Hyderabad. In blaming Thackwell

privately, for not obeying his orders and so failing to make effective pursuit, Gough mentions that between Maharajpur and the main position at Chonda there was a mile of open ground, with room enough for a brigade of cavalry to advance in line. Harry Smith further records that the Mahratta batteries were most ably posted, each flanking and supporting the other by a heavy cross-fire. By pushing his infantry into this cross-fire Gough obviously did exactly what the Mahrattas intended him to do. Harry Smith, in a private letter written at the time, declares that he earnestly advocated attack on the enemy's left flank, which would have immediately threatened their retreat. Whether, looking to the fact that Thackwell's cavalry was stopped short by an impassable ravine in this quarter, such an operation was feasible, is a question which cannot now be answered. Possibly Gough would have considered it had he not, by his own confession, underrated his enemy. For this he blamed the "politicals," who gave him misleading intelligence; but, with the experience of Keane, Willoughby Cotton and Elphinstone before him, he might have been more cautious in accepting information from such a source. In any case, whether rightly or wrongly, avoidably or unavoidably, he walked straight into the trap prepared for him. But it must be repeated that Napier had done exactly the same in Sind. 1843. Dec. 29.

There remains the question as to the use of the various arms. Harry Smith, who was a friend of Gough, affirmed that they were not combined to such advantage as they might have been, but ascribed the defect, at any rate in some measure, to the inexperience and bad training of the officers of the Indian army. There seems to be some ground for this criticism. In the first place, the heavy howitzers never came into action at all. The gunners complained that their pieces were brought up in line with the Thirty-ninth (apparently after the first stage of the action) but were not allowed to move forward, as their officer desired,

1843. Dec. 29. within eight hundred yards of the Mahratta position, at which range they could have knocked the Mahratta batteries to pieces, and rendered the advance of the infantry comparatively safe. On the other hand, Gough in private reproached this officer because he declined to open fire without orders; and then the question arises why the Commander-in-chief, who had thrice summoned the howitzers, was not at hand to give him his orders. Whatever the explanation, these four heavy cannon were turned to no account whatever in the fight.

As to the field-batteries and horse-batteries, they seem to have galloped up at once to close quarters, and to have behaved with the greatest dash and intrepidity. The reason, a quite sufficient one, for their hastening forward was that they were outranged by the Mahratta guns and preferred, if they must be under fire, to open effective fire in return. But it should seem that they went into action too soon and too far ahead of the infantry. If the front of the Mahratta position were so blind that it could not be properly reconnoitred, the inference would seem to be that the attacking lines could have been moved up unobserved to within a comparatively short distance of the enemy's lines, that the artillery might then have been let loose, and that the rush of infantry could have followed directly that the Mahratta guns had been silenced. But to dogmatise upon these points, looking to the scantiness of our knowledge, would be certainly imprudent and probably unfair.[1]

For the rest, Maharajpur set an extremely undesirable precedent for the presence of the Governor-general, when not also Commander-in-chief, with troops on active service in the field; and not only was His Excellency there but sundry ladies also. Ellenborough showed real enjoyment at finding himself under fire; but Mrs. Harry Smith, who was an

[1] For the gunners' version of the action see Buckle's *Memoir of the Service of the Bengal Artillery*, pp. 456-462.

old campaigner, found (to use her husband's words) her command anything but satisfactory. Both Governor-general and females had much better have stayed at home. When Lord Mornington proposed to accompany General Harris to Seringapatam in 1799, he was stopped by an abrupt sentence from his brother, Arthur Wellesley—"If I were in General Harris's situation and the Governor-general were to join the army, I should quit it." These words might with advantage have been writ large on the walls of the Governor-general's office at Calcutta. 1843. Dec. 29.

On this same day Sir John Grey, pursuant to his orders, came up with his force to the Antri pass, and finding it, after reconnaissance, to be strongly occupied by the enemy, decided to turn it by the south and make for Panniar. His line of march, with all the encumbrances of an army in India, covered a length of about ten miles, and his route lay parallel to a range of hills, according to Grey some miles, but according to one of his brigadiers, who seems to be more accurate, only a few hundred yards to his right. In any case, though he knew that he had left the Mahrattas in force somewhere on the other side of this range, Grey formed no flank-guard, nor even sent patrols of cavalry to the summit of these hills to watch them. He was quite content with the orthodox vanguard and rearguard, and trailed away in the most casual fashion, till at about three in the afternoon he reached his halting-place, near Panniar, and the troops prepared to make themselves comfortable. Then suddenly there was a sound of guns in the rear of the column, still many miles distant, and native troopers came galloping into the lines in panic, crying out that the rearguard was attacked and was being cut to pieces. The assembly was sounded; the troops stood to arms; and reinforcements of cavalry, with a troop of horse-artillery, were hastily despatched to the help of the rearguard.

Then gradually it dawned upon Grey that the

1843. Dec. 29. Mahrattas had been marching parallel with him all day, that their main body was in position on some high hills four miles to east of him, and that some of their guns, in a fortified village near Panniar, were firing at their leisure upon his huge column of baggage. His force included the British Buffs and Fiftieth, and five native battalions, organised in three brigades; a company of sappers and miners; with the Ninth Lancers and three regiments of native horse, organised in two brigades. Of these he sent forward the Buffs and the sappers and miners alone over the crest of the hills, and, receiving from them a report that the Mahrattas were in great force on the other side, set the Fiftieth and two native regiments in motion to support them, under Colonel Anderson of the Fiftieth. As these reached the foot of the ridge the Mahratta cannon-shot, fired from the other side, flew over them, and, when they deployed on the summit, the enemy's artillery fire redoubled, though the projectiles fell wide. Half a mile to his left Anderson could see the Buffs and a battery hotly engaged; while in his front was a deep rocky valley, filled with the enemy's infantry, and on the opposite side four guns in position. Anderson's brigade made its way to the foot of the valley under a heavy fire of grape and canister, and, taking shelter under a low bank, plied the enemy with musketry. The light was fast failing and Grey was nowhere to be found, so Anderson, taking matters into his own hands, cleared the valley and charged the guns. The Mahratta gunners stood firm to the last but were overwhelmed; and meanwhile the Buffs likewise had charged under a still heavier fire and captured eleven guns. The action came to an end at nightfall with the complete defeat of the Mahrattas.

Panniar is an affair even more obscure than Maharajpur. It is only certain that the Buffs bore the brunt of it and had seventy-two casualties, and that the Thirty-ninth Native Infantry, which supported them, had sixty-two, and the Queen's Fiftieth forty-two. But

out of a total loss of two hundred and thirteen killed and wounded, three European units claimed one hundred and sixteen, and eight native units ninety-seven, which figures tell their own story. The fight seems to have been a confused scrambling business to which General Grey had very little to say, the real work being done by Colonels Clunie of the Buffs and Anderson of the Fiftieth. It was a matter of great good fortune that the commander of Anderson's brigade had disabled himself accidentally by a pistol shot a few days before the engagement, for he was quite unable to conduct even a peaceful brigade-field-day without coming to Anderson for preliminary instruction. Whether Grey himself was much more competent than this brigadier may be doubted. He declared the loss of the Mahrattas to be very heavy, which, in the circumstances, is most unlikely. It ought to have been very heavy, if Grey had used his cavalry aright, and had embraced the rare opportunity of attacking a Mahratta army on the march. 1843. Dec. 29.

However, whatever the merits or demerits of the British commanders, the Gwalior campaign was successfully ended in one day. On the 31st the Rani came into the British camp, and a treaty was signed whereby the Maharaja's native army was reduced to ten thousand infantry and six thousand horse with thirty-two guns, and the native contingent of soldiers under British officers was raised to ten thousand. Thus was averted the formidable danger of a union between the trained forces of the Mahrattas and of the Sikhs against the British. Ellenborough, in order to make the most of the victory, distributed a bronze star for each of the two actions to all ranks; and then suddenly, in April 1844, he was recalled by the Court of Directors. He had not only signalised his tenure of office by a series of wars, but he had shown a marked preference for military men over civilians for every description of work in India. In fact he had carried reaction against Auckland's policy of trusting

1843. none but civilians to extreme lengths, having a partiality for soldiers that amounted to a passion. "The only regret I feel at leaving India," he said, in a farewell speech, "is that of being separated from the army. The most agreeable, most interesting period of my life has been that which I have passed here in cantonments and camps." Such an avowal was not likely to commend itself whether to Directors at home or to civil servants in India; being indeed so uncomplimentary as to be neither fair nor tactful to the latter. It is noteworthy that he received a long letter of sympathy from old Lord Wellesley, one of the greatest of Governors-general, who confessed to him that he too had loved the army.

Curiously enough Ellenborough's predilection for things military has left a singular mark upon the army at large. He had given medals to all ranks for Jalalabad and the Afghan campaign, and bronze stars for Maharajpur and Panniar. There were only two precedents for such general rewards, the medal for Dunbar and the medal for Waterloo. There had long been discontent among those, below the rank of field-officer, who had fought through many campaigns in the Peninsula and elsewhere, but had missed Waterloo, because they had been left without any decoration; and in 1840, possibly on hearing of the medal for Ghazni, certain officers approached the Duke of Wellington on the subject. The Duke replied that rewards were the Sovereign's business, and that four hundred orders of different classes of the Bath had been granted to Peninsular officers over and above certain privileges of pay on promotion and of pay on retirement. The Duke had spoken, and there was nothing more to be said.

Meanwhile the multiplication of medals not only for Indian campaigns but for the recent China campaign embittered the old grievance of the Peninsular officers, and in 1845 the Duke of Richmond presented a petition from them to the House of Lords on the

subject. Wellington once again poured cold water on the movement, but had much ado to justify himself. He dismissed the Waterloo medal as an unprecedented reward for an unprecedented occasion, and the China medal as granted for an extraordinary expedition; but he was fain to admit that the Queen had approved of Lord Ellenborough's medals, as it was necessary to mark the men's services. Then he stated the argument which, in his secret heart, weighed most heavily with him—it would be impossible to give a medal for the Peninsular War and to grant none for Egypt and Maida; and above all, medals could not be confined to the army but must be extended to the fleet. To all of this the Duke of Richmond answered, with sarcastic allusion to Ellenborough's Afghan medals: "Only suffer a disaster, and you will get a medal to revive your spirits." 1843.

It was evident that the matter could not end there. There was more severe fighting in India, shortly to be narrated; and in 1847 Sir de Lacy Evans again brought up the claim of Peninsular officers to medals in the Commons, when Lord John Russell announced that medals would be issued to all ranks who had been present at actions for which a medal had been issued to generals and field-officers. Clasps with the names of the various actions were added to the medals; the decoration was extended on the same principle to the navy; and since 1842 the grant of a medal, with or without clasps, to all ranks for every campaign has been recognised as a principle. The bronze star of Maharajpur and Panniar, made in that particular instance from captured cannon, has also been repeated for the march from Kabul to Kandahar in 1879 and for the earlier operations of the German war of 1914–1915, in each case—such is our poverty of invention—with a rainbow ribbon as in the case of the originals. Our military medals are now so numerous that collections of them form a distinct branch of numismatics; and all this is due to Lord Ellenborough. Beyond

1843. all doubt his object was to strengthen the moral tone of a disheartened army; and there are many veteran officers, wearing countless ribbons on the left breast, who will smile grimly at the Duke of Richmond's comment. For the British Army has had its share of inglorious campaigns; and it is such that the British public delights specially to honour.[1]

[1] The printed sources for the Gwalior campaign are few, being confined to the despatches of Gough and Grey in the Gazette; the details in Rait's *Life of Hugh 1st Viscount Gough*, i. 302-331; *Autobiography of Sir Harry Smith*, ii. 125-138; Anderson's *Recollections of a Peninsular Veteran*; and Fylor's *History of the 50th Regiment*, pp. 204-206. The two last deal in particular with Panniar.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THROUGHOUT this time and ever since the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839 there had been anarchy and chaos among the Sikhs in the Punjab. It would be lost labour to attempt to give an account of the intrigues, revolutions and assassinations that succeeded each other every few months. Actual power lay with the Prætorian Guard of the Punjab, the Khalsa or trained army, which, though organised and drilled according to European methods, was subject in time of peace to regimental committees, or *panchayats*, elected by the men; not in imitation of such remote models as the American levies of the War of Independence or the British volunteers of the War of the French Revolution and Empire, but in pursuance of the time-honoured practice of Indian village communities. The great object of every successive ruler or puppet in the Punjab was to conciliate the favour of the army, which signified for one thing the regular payment of its wages; and since anarchy does not favour the steady collection of revenue, this was a constant difficulty. There was in fact no saying when the Khalsa might take power into its own hands; and then there was likely to be trouble. However closely the British agent at Lahore might watch events, it was impossible for him, or for any man, to forecast the future. 1843.

It was in September 1843 that events in the Punjab took a turn alarming to the government at Calcutta. Shere Sing, a reputed son of Ranjit, who for three years had ruled at Lahore and steadfastly followed his

1843. Sept. father's policy of friendship with the British, was murdered by his chief minister; and, after a few more murders a boy, Dhuleep Sing, was, with the help of the army, made nominally Maharaja, with one Hira Sing for chief minister. Forthwith his mother, the Rani, her brother, Jewahir Sing, and her paramour, Lal Sing, became leaders, so to speak, of the opposition against Hira Sing; and both parties, as was natural, competed for the support of the army, by this time thoroughly hostile to the British. Sir Hugh Gough saw the instant need for military precaution. On the south side of the Sutlej, for the safety of the Sikh states under British protection, the British held two dangerously isolated outposts, Ferozepore, an open cantonment actually on the bank of the river, and Ludhiana, a small fort nearly eighty miles to east of it. The nearest military station to these was Ambala, sixty-five miles from Ludhiana, and one hundred and fifty from Ferozepore; and the nearest station to Ambala was Meerut, one hundred and forty miles further to the south and east. On the other hand Lahore was within fifty miles, including the passage of the Sutlej, from Ferozepore, and the Sikh army was reckoned at any strength from forty thousand to one hundred thousand disciplined men, with at least two hundred guns.

Unwilling to provoke jealousy and suspicion in the Sikhs, Gough took advantage of some troops which were on their way to relieve those in Sind to reinforce Ferozepore, Ludhiana and Ambala; and presently he submitted a scheme for increasing the garrisons of the two former places to thirty-five thousand men apiece, with a cavalry brigade of two thousand to maintain communication between them; for raising the force at Ambala to six thousand men; and for placing the British regiments within easy reach on the hills to eastward. These arrangements were never fully carried out, Hira Sing proving himself after all to be shy of a quarrel with the British; but the forts both at

Ferozepore and Ludhiana were strengthened, and orders were issued for the preparation of a pontoon-train for Ferozepore.[1] 1843.

For the time, therefore, the alarm passed away. In July 1844, Sir Henry Hardinge arrived at Calcutta to succeed Ellenborough as Governor-general, and one of his first acts was to appoint George Broadfoot to be agent at Lahore, where he took up his duties on the 1st of November. Before he had been there three weeks the Sikh army, in Hardinge's words, sold Hira Sing for a rise in their wages; and he was hunted out and murdered, leaving the Rani for the moment supreme. This increase of the Sikh soldiers' pay raised it to double of that received by the Bengal sepoys of the British service, which, in itself, introduced a new element of anxiety. A year earlier there had been a succession of mutinies among certain native regiments which had been ordered to embark for Sind. There seem to have been misunderstandings and blunders which might have been avoided by wiser handling; but there was also a very nasty spirit of insubordination underlying these mutinies, which spoke ill for the discipline of the Bengal native army. In fact, the native troops were already heading steadily towards the final catastrophe of 1857. Meanwhile it was only certain that the sepoys were afraid of the Sikhs, and that the Hindus among them were concealing their fright under the mask of religious scruples against fighting with them. There is no ground so holy as that which men stand in bodily fear of treading. 1844. July. Nov.

On the whole, therefore, the situation at the beginning of 1845 was one of decidedly greater peril; and Gough, even in August 1844, warned Hardinge that it would be only prudent to reinforce Ferozepore, 1845.

[1] So says Rait, *Life of Lord Gough*, i. 366; but the orders as to the pontoon may have been countermanded. At any rate the boats did not begin the journey up the Indus from Sukkur until July 1845. *I.O.S.C.*, vol. 4 of 1845, Proceedings of 4 July, Broadfoot to Gough, 16 June 1845.

1845. Ludhiana and Ambala, and especially to post an European regiment at Ferozepore. He was under no illusions as to the formidable character of the Sikh army. He pointed out that the British had no field-artillery fit to cope with the heavy metal of the Sikhs, and that infantry alone must decide the fate of every battle in India. Hardinge, almost morbidly anxious not to give offence at Lahore, refused his permission, while admitting the force of Gough's arguments; and only upon Broadfoot's reports of renewed anarchy at Lahore after the death of Hira Sing, did he at last consent, in January 1845, to build additional barracks at Ferozepore for one European and two native battalions and for two troops of horse-artillery. Sir John Littler was appointed to the command of the place, and Gough took up his quarters at Ambala.

The months crept on with alternations of hope and fear; and Hardinge, while stealthily collecting troops, did his utmost to keep the peace. In June some Sikh cavalry crossed the south bank of the Sutlej, but Broadfoot readily accepted the explanation of the raid that was offered by the Lahore Durbar. In July the Sikhs, perturbed by announcements in the ever-mischievous Indian press, turned frantically to military preparations, and Broadfoot reported that by the winter the Sikh army would be more efficient in material than it had been for years. But that army, he added, was now for the first time for many years dispersed, which was proof that hostilities were not immediately contemplated. At the end of the month Lal Sing, with a few followers, crossed the Sutlej, and Littler posted guards to prevent troops from crossing also; but
Sept. nothing came of the incident. A few weeks later Broadfoot took exception to a change of tone in the communications of the Lahore Durbar, and was promptly censured by Hardinge. "It is the Governor-general's desire to show all forbearance and consideration to the young Maharaja," he wrote, "and on no account is the notorious immorality of his

advisers to be made an occasion for breaking off the relations between the two governments . . . if military operations should be forced upon us, the Governor-general will have the satisfaction of knowing that *every* means of conciliation has been exhausted." Broadfoot accepted the rebuke, but answered that the forbearance lately and still shown to the Sikhs was beyond all previous example, and had been carried to the point of danger. 1845. Sept.

This was in September; and in that month very perilous symptoms began to display themselves at Lahore. The army was slowly reassembling with scarcely concealed determination to change the government; and Sikh agents were abroad trying to corrupt the British sepoys and enlisting discharged men and deserters. Jawahir Sing, unable to pay the troops, saw no way out of his difficulties but a quarrel with the British, and said that he would send two brigades to Ferozepore to bring on a collision. On the 21st of September he was murdered, and on the 23rd the military committee or *panchayat* at Lahore assumed the government and at once made friendly overtures to Broadfoot; but on the very next day a brigade demanded to be led to Ferozepore. There were indeed two factions in the Khalsa, and no one could say which would prevail. Hardinge, on hearing all this, persisted in his confidence that the British frontier would not be violated, but he took all precautions and ordered up two more native battalions. On the 6th of November the Lahore government sent Broadfoot the strongest assurances of friendship, which seemed to justify Hardinge. But the Governor-general none the less equipped seven regiments of cavalry, eighteen battalions of infantry and eleven batteries of artillery with the means of moving at the shortest notice; and Gough directed reinforcements to be ready to march up from Meerut, though at Hardinge's request he presently cancelled the order. Broadfoot's intelligence was contradictory. On the 20th of November he Nov.

1845. reported that from forty to sixty thousand Sikhs would
Nov. march at once to the Sutlej, and on the 23rd he announced that the project had been set aside. Gough became very impatient of this vague information, but, when his staff attempted to obtain more exact details of the numbers and composition of the Sikhs, they were obstructed by the jealousy of the political agents. Keane, it will be remembered, had made the same complaint on his march to Kandahar, and had resolutely formed an intelligence-department of his own. It is curious to note how even good men and good soldiers such as George Broadfoot and Henry Lawrence allowed their heads to be turned by their own importance when acting as political agents.[1]

By the end of November Littler at Ferozepore became anxious, and asked for an additional European regiment. Gough supported the request, which
Dec. reached Hardinge at Ambala on the 3rd of December; but the Governor-general, while sanctioning the movement, delayed the issue of actual orders until the 7th; and by that time it was too late. On the 8th Broadfoot gave definite information that the Sikhs would cross the Sutlej immediately; and the Governor-general, at considerable personal risk, rode to Ludhiana, and on his own responsibility ordered all but the weaker men of the garrison to be withdrawn to Bassian, some twenty-five miles to the south-west, where lay the principal grain depôt of the army. On the 11th the Sikhs began the passage of the Sutlej, and on that same day Gough ordered his cavalry to advance from Ambala, following himself with the infantry on the

[1] For the preceding paragraphs see Rait, *Life of Lord Gough*, i. 378-387; Broadfoot's *Career of Major George Broadfoot*, 327-372; *India Office Secret Consultations*, Vol. IV. of 1845, Proceedings of 15 Aug.; Broadfoot to Dhuleep Sing, 28 June; to Indian govt., 14 July; Vol. V. of 1845, Proceedings of 5 Sept.; Indian govt. to Broadfoot, 5 Sept.; Littler to Gough, 5 Sept.; Vol. VI. of 1845, Proceedings of 6 Dec.; Broadfoot to Indian govt., 15, 16 Sept., 6 Nov.; to Gough and Capt. P. Nicolson, 10 Sept.; Indian govt. to Broadfoot, 2 Oct.; Hardinge to Gough, 24 Nov. 1845.

12th. The situation was not too comfortable, 1845. Dec.
Hardinge's extreme reluctance to give any pretext for hostilities having moved him to take great risks. In all he had gathered together on the frontier some thirty thousand men; but they were widely dispersed. Littler at Ferozepore had about seven thousand, with which he was confident of holding his own; but the nearest troops to him were the five thousand men at Ludhiana, now mostly on march to Bassian, which itself was sixty miles from Ferozepore; the nearest force to Bassian was ten thousand men at Ambala, eighty miles away; and the remaining eight or nine thousand lay at Meerut nearly one hundred and twenty miles from Ambala.[1] The troops had, at any rate for the most part, not been brigaded and knew little of their comrades or commanders; and transport was scanty and unorganised. This last was no fault of Gough. He had wished to make timely provision but had been checked by Hardinge, who likewise acted upon the best of his judgement, for political reasons. By Hardinge's urgent request Broadfoot arranged for supply-depôts for ten thousand men at intervals of twenty miles between Meerut and Ferozepore, and got the work accomplished within five days, though only by great exertion and high-handed methods.[2] All of these troubles may well have been unavoidable, but they did not give a very fair chance to the Commander-in-chief.

The only thing to be done was to hustle the different detachments together as rapidly as possible, and hurry

[1] *Ferozepore*: H.M. 62nd; 12th, 14th, 27th, 33rd, 44th, 54th, 63rd N.I.; 8th N.L.C., 3rd N. Irreg. Horse, 2 horse and 2 field-batteries.
Ludhiana: H.M. 50th; 11th, 26th, 42nd, 48th, 73rd N.I.; detacht. N. Cav.; 2 horse-batteries.
Ambala: H.M. 9th, 31st, 80th; 16th, 24th, 41st, 45th, 47th N.I.; H.M. 3rd L.D.; 4th, 5th N.C.; artillery; H.M. 29th at Kasauli; 1st Bengal Eur. Regt. (102nd) at Sabathu.
Meerut: H.M. 10th Foot; 5 (?) battalions N.I.; H.M. 9th and 16th Lancers; 3rd N.L.C.; artillery with 26 guns.

[2] Broadfoot, *Career of George Broadfoot*, p. 376.

1845. them forward toward the isolated post at Ferozepore.
Dec. On the 16th the Ludhiana force and the cavalry from Ambala united at Badhni, thirteen miles west of Bassian, and on the 17th the rest of the men from Ambala joined them a short march further to westward. The force was now organised into one cavalry division under General Thackwell and three infantry divisions under Generals Harry Smith, Gilbert and McCaskill, but of these one only of the infantry divisions was complete, the other two being practically no more than brigades.[1] The entire body counted five regiments of cavalry, five troops of horse-artillery and two field-batteries with forty-two guns, and thirteen battalions, of which four only were British. Its strength may be reckoned at between eleven and twelve thousand men.

So far the men had travelled rather more than one hundred miles in five days, and there had been only one trifling affair with the enemy at Badhni. The next stage was to the village of Mudki, and on the
Dec. 18. morning of the 18th Gough, with all due precaution, covered his advance with a party of irregular horse which was accompanied by Broadfoot. The Sikhs likewise had sent mounted parties forward; and on reaching Mudki Broadfoot found the village in the occupation of the enemy, and sent his report back to Gough, who was three miles in rear. Thereupon Gough changed his formation from column of route

[1] CAVALRY DIVISION: Thackwell.
Mactier's Brigade: 9th Irreg. Horse, ½ 4th L.C.
Gough's „ 5th L.C., Gov.-genl.'s Bodyguard
White's „ H.M. 3rd L.D., ½ 4th L.C.

1ST INFANTRY DIVISION: Smith.
1st Brigade: (Bolton) H.M. 31st, 24th and 47th N.I.
2nd „ (Wheeler) H.M. 50th, 42nd, 48th N.I.

2ND INFANTRY DIVISION: Gilbert.
3rd Brigade: 45th N.I., 2nd Grenadiers N.I.
4th „ 16th Grenadiers N.I.

3RD INFANTRY DIVISION: McCaskill.
5th Brigade: H.M. 9th, 26th and 73rd N.I.
6th „ Nil.

to order of battle and marched on. On reaching Mudki he found that the Sikhs had withdrawn from it, and accordingly he halted and occupied the place. The men were utterly exhausted and suffering grievously from thirst. It is recorded that at the penultimate halt, two miles from Mudki, there were scarcely fifty men of the Thirty-first with the colours, while the stragglers were scattered for miles in rear. Gradually they dragged themselves up. Between two and three o'clock the camels began to come in; and the weary and hungry troops bestirred themselves to cook their food. Whether or not the Sikhs were shrewd enough to think this a good moment for attack must be a matter of conjecture; but certain it is that Broadfoot, while lunching with Hardinge, received messages from his cavalry and his intelligencers that the enemy was advancing. He rode out instantly to confirm the report with his own eyes, and, returning, pointed to a great cloud of dust with the words, "There, Your Excellency, is the Sikh army." 1845. Dec. 18.

There was and is no certain information of the enemy's strength, but the lowest estimate states it as eight to ten thousand horse, two to three thousand foot, and about twenty-two guns. It is possible that their infantry were more numerous; but Gough's own estimate of fifteen to twenty thousand foot and forty guns seems certainly to be excessive. The ground for a mile in front of the British was open ploughed fields, beyond which came a deep belt of dense jungle and stunted trees. The Sikhs were still from two to three miles distant when the alarm was first given, and there was plenty of time to make dispositions for receiving the attack in the open; but Gough, perhaps fearful lest his enemy should escape him, hurried his cavalry and horse-artillery forward, and the Sikhs, observing their approach, halted in the jungle. They then opened fire from their cannon, and the British horse-batteries, galloping up to the edge of the jungle, unlimbered and answered them, though they could

1845. Dec. 18. see little to guide their aim but the smoke of the enemy's guns. This duel lasted about half-an-hour, when the two field-batteries came up to join their five brethren of the horse; while Gough's and White's brigades trotted forward to protect their right, and Mactier's brigade to cover their left flank. The exchange of cannon-shot was then renewed, when, after about another half-hour, the enemy's fire slackened, their guns having been either silenced for the time or withdrawn. At the same time great masses of Sikh horse advanced as if to attempt a great enveloping movement. Four horse-batteries, two on each flank, were thereupon pushed into the jungle to foil them. The British cavalry by brilliant charges quickly made an end of the menace; and the batteries were then ordered once more to close to the centre in order to support the advance of the infantry.

The line had meanwhile been formed, with Wheeler's brigade of Smith's division on the right, and then, in succession to the left of it, Bolton's brigade, the four battalions of McCaskill's division and the three battalions of Gilbert's.[1] By this time it was almost dusk of a short winter's day, and the dust was so thick that little could be seen. The batteries tried to struggle forward, but the jungle grew steadily denser as they advanced, and only with great difficulty could the guns force their way through it. Close in their

[1] Gough says that he had but twelve battalions in action, from which I infer that the 24th N.I. was left in Mudki as baggage guard. The places of the twelve battalions can only be filled by conjecture, though it is certain that the 50th was on the extreme right. I take their order to have been as follows:

Right Wing:	47th, 31st.	42nd, 48th, 50th.	*Right*
	Bolton	Wheeler	
Left Wing:	*Left* 2nd Gren., 45th, 16th.	80th, 73rd, 26th, 9th.	
	Gilbert	McCaskill	

front the enemy stood firm, both artillery and infantry; 1845.
and the British gunners and horses began to fall fast Dec. 18.
under a destructive blast of grape and musketry. The infantry went forward with difficulty, the jungle forbidding any steady regularity of line, and the enemy's sharpshooters, hidden in trees, picked off man after man with galling and demoralising accuracy. The sepoys, all inwardly fearful of the Sikhs, began to hang back. Wheeler's brigade, threatened at the outset by Sikh cavalry, had formed square, but only the Fiftieth obeyed Smith's order to re-form line and advance, the two native battalions remaining in square and firing in all directions, even on the rear of the Fiftieth. Harry Smith decided the combat here by riding into the thick of the enemy's infantry with one of the Fiftieth's colours, when his white soldiers speedily dispersed them with the bayonet and mastered the guns.

Immediately on his left Bolton's brigade was similarly tried. Bolton himself, adjuring the Thirty-first to be steady and fire low, was mortally stricken. Colonel Byrne, who commanded the regiment, also fell severely wounded, but his men stormed forward, shattered the Sikh infantry with their fire and carried their batteries with the bayonet. Still further to the left McCaskill's and Gilbert's battalions were less severely engaged; but everywhere there was sharp fighting, and Hardinge, who had lent most of his staff to Gough, was in the thick of it. Between dusk and darkness the confusion was very great, and the British troops undoubtedly fired into each other. Sir Frederick Currie, the Secretary to the Indian government, wrote that twice he and the Governor-general were under heavy and destructive fire from British guns and musketry, and that, in the opinion of both, half of the casualties at Mudki were caused by friends. The Sikh army was not less bewildered than the British. It should seem that their infantry, when first driven back by Wheeler's brigade, retired blindly to a flank,

1845. Dec. 18. passed across the greater part of the British line in column, and was then hustled back once more across the front of Wheeler. Altogether Mudki was a blind affair from first to last, and was finally stopped by darkness.

Gough's casualties amounted to eight hundred and seventy-two, of which number five hundred and six were Europeans, and three hundred and sixty-six were natives of India. The senior officers suffered heavily. Of Gough's staff Sir Robert Sale, Quarter-master-general, and two more were killed, and Major Patrick Grant and two more were wounded, Grant himself dangerously. Among the divisional leaders McCaskill was killed, and of the brigade-commanders Bolton and Wheeler were wounded, the former mortally. The Third Light Dragoons lost two officers, fifty-six men and over one hundred horses killed, and thirty-five of all ranks wounded—the result of charging against batteries. The Thirty-first had one hundred and fifty-seven casualties; and the Fiftieth one hundred and nine, the Ninth fifty-two, and the Eightieth twenty-four. Of the native regiments the Forty-second Native Infantry had eighty-nine killed and wounded and the Second Grenadiers seventy-one. The Forty-seventh, which was brigaded with the Thirty-first, counted not one-tenth of its casualties. The significance of these figures is not to be mistaken. The brunt of the work fell upon the British, and the sepoys did not do their fair share of the work. The enemy's losses were presumed to be severe and they left seventeen guns in the hands of the victors; but, taken as a whole, the action seems to have been unsatisfactory and unduly costly. Harry Smith is the critic who deplored the advance into the jungle instead of awaiting the Sikhs on the plain; and, though all of his comments upon this campaign should be received with caution, it is not obvious why Gough should have hurried his troops headlong into woodland fighting in their first action. Men, unless they be

veterans of experience, invariably shoot each other on these occasions; and these soldiers knew neither their commanders nor their comrades outside their own regiments, and were further exhausted by a succession of forced marches. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that the sepoys hung back and fired upon those who went forward. On the other hand, Gough may have apprehended that the Sikhs would decline an action if they found him ready; and his instinct to fly at an oriental enemy as soon as they showed themselves was not, in principle, unsound. 1845. Dec. 18.

The troops were too much fatigued to follow up their success, though Gough himself did not leave the field until two o'clock in the morning; and the 19th was devoted to rest and to care of the wounded. In the evening the Twenty-ninth Foot, the Hundred and Second and two native regiments, came up, together with a couple of eight-inch howitzers, the only heavy pieces with the army. Their arrival enabled the skeleton brigades of the divisions commanded by Gilbert and by Wallace (who had succeeded McCaskill) to be filled out somewhat, though not without fresh dislocations;[1] and meanwhile Colonels Hicks and Ryan took the places of Bolton and Wheeler as brigadiers in Harry Smith's division. Finally Hardinge, who was junior to Gough in the army, waived his rank as Governor-general and volunteered to serve as his second in command. Since he would not, as a soldier, see a battle go forward without taking part in it, possibly it was better that some definite function should be assigned to him. At Mudki he had, so to speak, made himself generally useful, apparently Dec. 19.

[1] 2ND DIVISION: Gilbert.
3rd Brigade: (Taylor) H.M. 29th; 45th N.I.
4th „ (Maclaran) 102nd Foot; 2nd and 16th Grenadiers N.I.

3RD DIVISION: Wallace.
5th Brigade: H.M. 9th; 26th and 73rd N.I.
6th „ H.M. 80th.

1845. taking charge of the Third Division after McCaskill's fall.[1] From henceforward he commanded the left wing.

Gough's first objective was still Ferozepore, and his first purpose a junction with Littler's detachment which lay there. But, if his force was divided, so also was that of the Sikhs; one portion of their army, under Tej Sing, being employed in watching Littler, while the other, under Lal Sing, lay in a strongly entrenched position at Ferozeshah, from eight to nine miles north-west of Mudki, barring one direct road from that place to Ferozepore and flanking another, which ran parallel to it from one to two miles further to the
Dec. 20. south. On the 20th Gough sent orders to Littler to leave a small guard only to hold his cantonments, and to slip away with the bulk of his troops to join him. Where the junction was to be effected does not appear, though presumably some definite place was fixed; but it is certain that Littler was instructed to move to south of the Sikh entrenchments at Ferozeshah. These orders reached Littler safely on the evening of the 20th, and at about the same time Gough summoned his generals to him to explain to them his plan of attack for the morrow.

At this point we strike against a mystery which has never been cleared up, namely the quarter from which Gough originally designed to assail the Sikh position. All information went to show that it was, roughly speaking, quadrilateral[2] in shape, measuring roughly speaking about a mile and a half from north to south, and nearly a mile from east to west. Of the four sides the northern, southern and western were reported to be strongly entrenched and surmounted by guns of very heavy metal.[3] The approach to these three faces was further encumbered by

[1] So I judge from Hardinge's *Life of Lord Hardinge* (Rulers of India Series), p. 85.

[2] More accurately it was oval; but it is simpler to treat it as quadrilateral for purposes of description.

[3] *Broadfoot*, p. 389.

belts of jungle. The eastern face on the contrary, 1845.
namely that which looked towards Mudki, was un- Dec. 20.
protected and looked out upon perfectly open country. Obviously, therefore, if Gough desired no more than the capture of the position and the opening of the road to Ferozepore, this eastern side offered most advantages for an attack. But if, as his instructions to Littler seem to suggest, he desired not only to drive Lal Sing away but to intercept his retreat upon Tej Sing's army and upon Lahore, uniting first with Littler's detachment for that purpose, then plainly the southern face was preferable. It is, of course, possible that Gough designed to assail the eastern face himself, and leave to Littler the task of striking at the flank of the flying enemy from the south; but it does not appear that Littler received from him any orders except to move out and effect a junction with Gough to south of Ferozeshah. This would mean a march of some nine miles, with no further obstruction—provided of course that Tej Sing's vigilance could be eluded—than the passage of a broad dry water-course. Two things only are certain in respect of Gough's conference with his generals on the morning of the 20th, first, that Hardinge was not present, his Military Secretary taking his place, and secondly, that on the morrow the generals either required fresh instructions or received no instructions at all respecting their place and mode of attack.[1]

In any case Gough's army marched at 4 A.M. on Dec. 21.
the 21st, leaving two native regiments at Mudki for the protection of the wounded and the baggage. Moving in column of route through pitch darkness it made very slow progress, and, apparently, took the best part of seven hours to traverse four or five miles

[1] Harry Smith, *Autobiography*, ii. 151, says, "Nor were generals of Division made the least aware of how or what or where they were to attack." Though, as I have said, I receive Harry Smith's comments on this campaign with caution, he, being a divisional general, should speak with some authority. Still, other generals may have received more precise orders than himself.

1845. and to deploy within about two miles of the eastern
Dec. 21. face of the Sikh entrenchments. At 10.30 there was a halt, when the men breakfasted off the contents of their haversacks; and half-an-hour later all was ready. Gough, who had apparently ridden forward to see what he could for himself, returned to Hardinge, who was eating with his staff, and said, "Sir Henry, if we attack at once, I promise you a splendid victory." Hardinge, much surprised, beckoned Gough to follow him to a clump of trees fifty yards away; and there Gough repeated his suggestion for an immediate attack. Hardinge insisted that the junction with Littler must first be effected, which signified the movement of the army southward to meet him. Gough pleaded that such a manœuvre would mean the abandonment of his communications with Ambala and of his wounded at Mudki. Hardinge would not yield; and it is not difficult to supply his arguments by imagination. Gough, on his side, was not less resolute, urging in particular that this was the shortest day in the year and that time was all important. Finally Hardinge closed the discussion with the words, "Then, Sir Hugh, I must exercise my civil powers as Governor-general and forbid the attack until Littler has come up." [1]

[1] It is quite impossible to reconcile all the conflicting narratives of this apparently simple matter. Mr. Rait's account, based on Gough's, is itself full of contradictions. He says (ii. 13) that Gough's force after covering four miles found itself face to face with the right of the Sikh entrenchments. As the Sikh front may be assumed to be facing eastward, towards Mudki, the Sikh right would be the south. Again he says (p. 14) that the words "Right wheel into line," if given at 11 A.M. would have brought on an action; (and p. 17) that at this same hour the army was fronting the eastern face of the Sikh position. Now if an army were in open column, facing westward, the words "Right wheel into line" would change its front to the north. This would be correct for an attack on the south front of the entrenchments; but for an attack on the east front absurd. Hardinge (*Life of Lord Hardinge*, p. 90) says that a circuitous route was taken, but implies that, after Sir Henry Hardinge gave his decision that Littler's arrival must be awaited, Gough's troops simply sat still—in other words that Gough had already brought them over against the southern front. On the other hand,

The Governor-general had spoken, and Gough was bound to obey. The army was set in motion again in a south-westerly direction, and before long a cloud of dust to westward announced the approach of Littler. It was past noon before that officer himself rode up, ahead of his troops, and a full hour later before his two regiments of horse, six battalions and twenty-one guns, marched in to the village of Misriwala, upon the left of Gough's array.[1] Littler seems to have slipped away from Tej Sing's front deftly enough, thanks to the old trick of leaving his camp standing, and there was no sign that the Sikh leader was following him. But he had not started until 8 A.M., which seems to indicate that, if Gough had from the first determined to attack at 11 A.M., he did not count upon Littler to take any serious part in the fight. 1845. Dec. 21.

Gough's force was now some eighteen thousand strong, with two heavy howitzers and sixty-three pieces of light and heavy artillery; and he made immediate preparations for attack upon the south front of the Sikh entrenchments. On the extreme right was a

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Gough's despatch says that, after debouching four miles on the road to Ferozeshah, his force, instead of advancing to the direct attack (that is to say upon the eastern face) of the enemy's works, manœuvred to their [the Sikhs'] right, that is to say, to attack the southern face; and Harry Smith confirms this by saying (ii. 150) that Gough's force almost crossed the front of the enemy's position. It must be added that Gough's despatch is confused and inaccurate. He says that the longest sides of the enemy's quadrilateral were those facing Ferozepore (westward) and the "open country"—a vague term, which, however, can only be construed as eastward. The shorter sides he describes as looking towards the Sutlej—a vague term which might mean either westward or northward—and Mudki, which can only mean eastward. He then says that he attacked the face towards "the open country," *i.e.* the western face, and this curiously enough is confirmed by the very minute account of the action in Innes's *History of the Bengal European Regiment*, p. 379.

[1] LITTLER'S FORCE:

7th Brigade: (Reid) H.M. 62nd; 12th and 14th N.I.
8th „ (Ashburnham) 33rd, 44th, 54th N.I.
Cavalry Brigade: (Harriott) 8th N.L.C.; 3rd Irreg. N.C.
Artillery: 21 guns.

1845. Dec. 21. troop of horse-artillery, and then, in succession to the left, Taylor's and Maclaran's brigades of Gilbert's division. In the centre were massed three troops of horse-artillery, two field-batteries, the heavy howitzers and some rockets. On the left of these stood Wallace's division, no more than four battalions, then another horse-battery, then Littler's division, and on the extreme left Littler's cannon, one and a half batteries of field-guns, and two troops of horse-artillery. In second line Harry Smith's division formed the reserve, its two brigades being stationed on either flank of the massed guns, Ryan's on the right and Hicks's to the left. Littler's cavalry, being left at his own disposal, took post to his left rear; and the rest of the horse was aligned on the reserve in support of each wing.

The Sikh position seems to have followed the conformation of a cluster of low hillocks, which rose about ten feet above the plain, and encircled the village of Ferozeshah. It was, as has been said, roughly a quadrilateral, and the comment of one who took part in the fight that "this bull was all horns" implies that no one point in it, despite of the reports of spies, was much weaker than another. The fortifications, however, were not unusually formidable, having neither deep ditches nor high ramparts; in fact they were simply good shelter-trenches. But within them were nearly one hundred guns, one-quarter of them of really heavy metal and most of them of greater calibre than any of Gough's pieces, except his two heavy howitzers. Moreover, even those of equal calibre with Gough's were far weightier in metal, could fire a greater charge of powder and were therefore effective at a longer range. The Sikh artillery-men, further, worshipped their guns, and could be trusted to work them with skill and to stand by them to the end. Lastly, they were backed by a strong force of good foot. It was morally certain that the brunt of the work in storming such a position must fall upon the infantry.

The marshalling of the troops into array took up much valuable time. It was 3.30 P.M. before the action began, and even then the first attack seems to have been launched prematurely. Littler upon the extreme left opened it with an advance of his artillery, which hurried on rapidly within range of grape-shot and for a time drove the gunners of the opposing batteries from their guns. His two brigades then advanced, Reed's leading with Ashburnham's in support, in such order as they could preserve while pushing through the belt of jungle, and on emerging into the open, within three hundred yards of the entrenchments, were met by a terrific blast of grape. Reed gave the order to charge, and the Sixty-second rushed on half-way over the open space towards the guns. Two hundred and sixty of them were mowed down in ten minutes, but success was within their grasp when they wavered and hesitated. Their officers made frantic efforts to urge them forward, but in vain. They gave way and went back; and the two sepoy battalions that were brigaded with them, though they had not suffered a third of their losses, went back with them, if they had not gone before them. Ashburnham's brigade seems to have made little effort to advance, and the whole division drew back out of range and remained out of action for the rest of the day. 1845. Dec. 21.

Meanwhile Gough, observing Littler's advance and fearful lest he should gain the trenches unsupported, hurried Wallace's and Gilbert's divisions to the attack. Their progress through the jungle was difficult, for the Sikh shot cut down heavy branches and trees in all directions, making the preservation of order almost impossible. They emerged into a dense bank of dust and smoke. The British line far overlapped the southern face of the entrenchments, and the men, eager to close but seeing only a comparatively short row of flashes before them, crowded in towards the centre. Thus they masked the fire of the British batteries, the greater number of which had already pressed forward

1845. Dec. 21. beyond the jungle as the only chance to avoid being blown out of the field. The left of Wallace's division seems to have given way; but the right, or at any rate the Ninth Foot, stormed forward, as did also the British battalions of Gilbert's division. Even Gilbert's right brigade staggered for a moment under the tempest of Sikh shot, but Hicks's brigade, coming up from the reserve, melted into one line with it and carried it onward. The edge of the ditch before the Sikh trenches was strewn with stumps and branches of trees through which the men struggled, blaspheming hideously; and then, falling upon the Sikh gunners with the bayonet, they made an end of them. Quickly re-forming upon the low heights they plunged down among the Sikh infantry in rear of the guns and drove them back into their camp. So dense were the smoke and dust that the darkness was as the darkness of night.

Meanwhile on the left Harry Smith, observing the order of Littler's attack, had predicted its failure to Hardinge, who had directed Smith to bring up his division without delay. Smith had only one brigade, Ryan's, under his hand, but he set it in motion at once, and arrived just in time to check a counter-attack by the Sikhs upon the gap opened by the retreat of Littler's division and of Wallace's left. His advance was a difficult matter, his progress being encumbered by a crowd of broken troops, though some of the Fourteenth Native Infantry of Reed's brigade rallied upon him and went forward with him. To meet the Sikh counter-attack he was obliged to wheel up the right of his brigade, but his whole dependence was upon the Fiftieth, which bore down all opposition with the bayonet, and, rushing on, captured the batteries opposed to them. Thus the British had obtained a footing from end to end of the southern face; and just at this time, as it seems, the Third Light Dragoons, being ordered to attack a battery on the eastern face, charged headlong over the entrenchments, cut down the Sikh gunners, and then swept with loud shouts

over tent-pegs, tent-ropes, guns and every description of obstacle straight through the Sikh reserves to the opposite side of the enemy's position, where they rallied, having lost half their number, a mere handful of unconquerable men. 1845. Dec. 21

Meanwhile the Hundred and Second had joined the Ninth, and, bearing to the left, were attacking in flank the batteries on the western front of the position, capturing and spiking gun after gun. They then turned to traverse the central street of the Sikh camp towards Ferozeshah, when the explosion of a magazine in the middle of them destroyed many and scattered the Hundred and Second in all directions. Those that had passed the magazine bore away to their right, those in rear of it to their left, where they joined Harry Smith, who, having re-formed the Fiftieth, was pressing on upon the village. Here there was a stiff fight and heavy slaughter of the Sikhs, but the buildings were carried. More and more men of Gilbert's and Wallace's divisions joined Harry Smith, and, still advancing, he pushed on through the enemy's camp for half-a-mile beyond the village, when darkness brought him to a standstill.

The confusion by this time was unspeakable. The Sikh camp had caught fire in many places; tents were blazing up fiercely for a few minutes and then dying down; magazines, great and small, were exploding with savage flashes; but no light could pierce through the blinding fog of dust and smoke. Hardinge, dreading lest the men should fire upon each other, and finding his progress barred by the burning camp, collected all that he could and made them lie down on the camp's skirts, so as to shelter them as far as possible from the Sikh batteries which were still firing from the north and east. Harry Smith, north of the village, found himself with some three thousand men of various regiments round him, all so mad with excitement as to be almost unmanageable. He listened and looked eagerly, though in vain,

1845. Dec. 21. for Gilbert to come up on his right; and at last realising that he was isolated and alone, he drew up his troops in a semi-circle, with his right flank towards the village. Hardly was the manœuvre completed, when the Sikhs attacked his right, where the sepoys gave way at once. With some difficulty he contracted his formation, in time to face the enemy, who now closed upon him from all sides with cannon, swivel-guns and musketry, firing and shouting and beating the French *pas de charge* on their drums. Finally they brought up a gun to his rear, from which they poured in a continual fire of grape. The native troops became more and more excited and unsteady, but the British soldiers, despite of heavy losses, stood firm; and after waiting thus till two or three o'clock in the morning, Harry Smith made a feint of a counter-attack, and under cover of the noise and smoke filed round the western side of Ferozeshah. Continuing his course southward he came first upon the wounded men of the Sixty-second, who had fallen in Littler's abortive attack, and further on to the village of Misriwala, where, finding some formed artillery and cavalry and a mob of some thousands of stragglers and lost men, he came for the time to a halt.

Throughout this time Hardinge and Gough were keeping their men together as best they could. When they met, apparently early in the evening, they agreed that the situation was most critical, but neither for a moment dreamed of any other course but to stand firm and fight the battle out. There were many whose hearts failed them and gave weaker counsels. Messages were brought to Smith that the Governor-general advised retreat upon Ferozepore. He declined to believe it and he was right, for the two chiefs never wavered for a moment. Towards midnight the fire of a heavy Sikh gun became so galling that Hardinge called upon the Eightieth and Hundred and Second to silence it. They advanced in two lines at the double, exchanged a volley or two with the Sikh

infantry round the gun, which belched out double charges of grape to the last, and then with a rush they fell upon the enemy, captured not only the gun which was the principal offender, but a battery of lighter pieces, spiked them and returned, many fewer than had started, but with their duty done. In fact the spirit of the British troops was not in the least impaired. They were utterly exhausted after twenty-four hours on foot with very little food; they were suffering terribly from thirst, for the Sikhs kept sharp-shooters round the wells and shot down all who approached them; and the night was bitterly and cruelly cold. Yet Hardinge, visiting in succession the Ninth, Twenty-ninth, Thirty-first and Fiftieth, old comrades of the Peninsula, found one and all in good heart, worthy of such dauntless leaders as himself and Gough. 1845. Dec. 21.

To the great relief of both Harry Smith joined them shortly before dawn. Smith at Misriwala had been met by a staff-officer who, evidently quite unnerved and for the time insane, ordered him to collect every man and march for Ferozepore. Refusing point blank to obey, Smith found an officer who could guide him to Gough; and so once again the army was more or less re-united. Hardinge, during the dark hours, secretly sent Napoleon's sword—a present from Wellington—to safe keeping; ordered all State papers at Mudki to be destroyed; and insisted on the withdrawal of Prince Waldemar of Prussia, who had accompanied the army as an amateur, to a place of safety. The night was the most anxious ever spent by a Governor-general and a Commander-in-chief in India; but slowly and painfully it passed away, and at dawn both were cheerful and confident. Dec. 22.

The morning broke with a dense mist, but when this had been dispelled by the sun, it was seen that the Sikhs had re-occupied the entrenchments captured and abandoned by the British on the preceding day. Three troops of horse-artillery at once galloped

1845. Dec. 22. forward to open upon them, and were answered by some heavy pieces which blew up two or three ammunition waggons. But the Sikh fire soon grew feeble; the infantry advanced with a shout and swept over the trenches and through the camp, meeting with little or no resistance, to the northern face, where they halted, as if on parade, while Gough and Hardinge rode down the line amid wild cheering. The position had been taken at last, and over seventy guns with it, while most of Lal Sing's infantry had evidently retreated during the night.

A certain proportion of men were ordered to fall out, some to fetch water and others to see to the captured guns, when the cavalry, which had been sent forward to watch the retiring enemy, sent in reports that they had been checked by a second Sikh force, advancing from the direction of Ferozepore. This was the army of Tej Sing which, having discovered the withdrawal of Littler, was following him up. For a moment even Gough was inwardly, though not outwardly, dismayed. His men and horses were exhausted, and his artillery-ammunition was almost spent; and here was a fresh enemy in superior numbers before him, and a fresh battle to be fought. He disposed his force in a hollow square round the village of Ferozeshah, Gilbert's division in the centre facing west, and the two remaining divisions facing north and south, following, in fact, the line of the Sikh entrenchments. The seven troops of horse-artillery moved to the front and opened fire, but were soon obliged to retire by weight of superior metal and by lack of ammunition. The guns were then mostly placed in prolongation of the northern face, though three were posted at the north-eastern angle; and for these last some forty or fifty rounds were collected from the Sikh ammunition captured on the previous day. Tej Sing now opened a heavy and destructive cannonade upon Gough's infantry, and Gough was fain to endure it, for his men were too weary to attack with the bayonet and had hardly

a cartridge in pouch. Had the Sikh leader known it, 1845.
he had only to continue the fire from his heavy guns Dec. 22
to win an easy victory, for even the British found the trial unendurable. He did prolong it for some time, and then, manœuvring with his cavalry to turn Gough's right, compelled him to change position from west to north. Any change was a relief to the troops, and the appointed movements were executed with perfect steadiness and order. But the Sikh guns continued to play on Gough's infantry with terrible effect, and at length the gallant old man, conspicuous in the white coat which he always wore in action, galloped out alone with a single aide-de-camp to draw the fire upon himself. Meanwhile the Sikh cavalry bore down upon Gough's left, which was in echelon of squares upon the plain, approached to within one hundred and fifty yards, and halted. Gough ordered White's brigade to charge; and the Third Light Dragoons, weak though they were in numbers and with horses that can hardly have been able to gallop, crashed into the stationary mass and forced it back.

Then, before any one could realise what was going forward, the British cavalry re-formed column; and presently, together with the whole of the artillery, began to file away towards Ferozepore. The mad staff-officer, who had retreat to Ferozepore upon the brain, had been at work once more, and on this occasion to some effect. At about the same time, curiously enough, Tej Sing began to draw off his troops. He had learned something of the late action, and judged that if the British could capture such a position after such carnage, any attack upon them while defending that position must be hopeless. And thus after strange vicissitudes, at about four o'clock in the afternoon of the 22nd of December, the battle of Ferozeshah came finally to its end.

Gough's casualties in the two days amounted to twenty-four hundred and fifteen, of which nearly seven hundred were killed and seventeen hundred and twenty

1845. Dec. 22. were wounded. Of the total number, twelve hundred and seven of the fallen were Europeans, including one hundred and fifteen officers, although the native cavalry regiments exceeded the British by six to one, and the native battalions present numbered fourteen against six British. Among the fallen officers were Wallace, Somerset—Hardinge's military secretary—and Broadfoot; while Brigadier-general Taylor and two more members of Hardinge's staff were wounded. "Our native cavalry did not behave well," wrote Hardinge a week after the action. "The Third Dragoons on every occasion behaved admirably, going through everything. . . . The British infantry, as usual, carried the day. I can't say I admire sepoy fighting." On this testimony we can let rest the question who bore the brunt of Ferozeshah. The heroes of the action were beyond doubt the Third Light Dragoons. It is rare for cavalry to charge entrenched artillery; and only troopers of rare devotion and discipline would have faced such a trial. The Third had lost nearly one hundred men and over one hundred and twenty horses on the 18th of December; they lost one hundred and fifty-two more men and sixty more horses on the 21st; yet the remnant without hesitation charged and defeated superior numbers of Sikh cavalry on the 22nd. Few regiments of horse in the world can show a finer record of hardihood and endurance. Of the infantry, the heaviest loss fell on the Ninth, who counted two hundred and eighty casualties; the Sixty-second counting two hundred and sixty; the Hundred and Second two hundred and four; the Twenty-ninth one hundred and eighty-four; the Thirty-first one hundred and forty-two; the Fiftieth one hundred and twenty-four; and the Eightieth eighty-one. This signified that in two actions, separated by only three days, the Ninth had suffered over three hundred and thirty casualties in action and the Thirty-first close upon three hundred. The native regiments which suffered most severely at

Ferozeshah, as at Mudki, were the Second and Sixteenth Grenadiers. 1845. Dec. 22.

The action has for many reasons been a subject of controversy, the chief point of debate being whether Hardinge were right or wrong in forbidding the attack until Littler had joined Gough, and whether Gough would have done better if he had been left to follow his own designs. Upon this it can only be said that, if a General's plans be overruled, and overruled moreover on the very point of execution, by superior authority, he cannot be held responsible for the consequences. Whether, as an abstract question of military expediency, Hardinge were right in forbidding the attack until the junction with Littler had been effected, men will probably debate until the end of time. Thereby he certainly caused much delay and sacrificed valuable hours of daylight; though, apart from Hardinge's intervention, much time seems to have been occupied to no great purpose before the attack was delivered. But it is not fair to blame a general for any miscarriage, if he have not a free hand to fight an action as he thinks best.

As to Gough's tactical handling of his troops, it is exceedingly hard to judge. His great initial difficulty was that his artillery was so inferior in numbers and weight of metal to that of the Sikhs that it was practically of value only, so to speak, as musketry of greater calibre and longer range. To all intent he was like a man who has to meet an enemy armed with an old-fashioned rifle, having himself only a fowling-piece. At a distance of five and twenty yards the one weapon is as deadly as the other; but the problem is how to close to within five and twenty yards without serious damage. The British round-shot did little or no mischief to the Sikh guns or their carriages, and the grape-shot was effective only so long as the fire could be maintained to drive the Sikh artillerymen from their guns. This was a very serious disadvantage; and Gough was really

1845. forced to throw all the brunt of the work upon the infantry.

Whether the infantry was manipulated in the best fashion, is another matter. Hardinge[1] wrote that Gough disliked framing proper orders and looking to their execution; and this criticism seems to be confirmed by Harry Smith, who speaks of the army as "one unwieldy battalion under one commanding officer, who had not been granted the power of ubiquity." It should seem that Gough, having laid his plans for an assault upon the eastern face of the Sikh position—say two miles of entrenchment—did not modify them for the attack upon half that length of front; and hence the men crowded in upon the centre, putting the guns out of action and throwing each other into confusion. It is to be noticed, too, that when the British did break into the southern front, they were able to assail the batteries on the western and eastern fronts in flank, which shows that those batteries had not been moved. Wisdom after the event would therefore seem to suggest that, if Gough had made a demonstration with cavalry and horse-artillery upon one of the longer fronts, formed his infantry in greater depth and thrown them in successive waves upon the southern front, he would have accomplished his task with greater ease and much slighter loss. But it is very easy to fight a battle from an arm-chair; and Gough, after all, did but imitate the time-honoured methods of Monson and Wellesley. In any case he won a decided victory.[2]

[1] Rait, ii. 92.

[2] The authorities for this account of Ferozeshah are: *Despatches and General Orders* of the Army of the Sutlej (published with a map in two small volumes, London, 1846); Rait, *Life of Lord Gough*, ii. 13-39, 91-94, 365-373; Innes, *History of the Bengal European Regiment*, 380-392; Hardinge, *Life of Lord Hardinge*, 91-99; Cannon's *History of the Thirty-first Regiment*; Fyler, *History of the Fiftieth Regiment*; Broadfoot, *Career of Major George Broadfoot*, 391-426; Sir Harry Smith's *Autobiography*, ii. 150-162; Buckle's *Services of the Bengal Artillery*, pp. 482-491.

CHAPTER XXXIV

On the 23rd of December Hardinge rode into Ferozepore, where he met the cavalry and artillery marching out of the town, and had a stormy interview with the unfortunate staff-officer—still quite demented—who had ordered them away from Ferozeshah. The Sikhs, under Tej Sing, had recrossed the Sutlej by the ford of Sobraon; but Gough was powerless to follow them until his reinforcements should have arrived from Meerut, and his siege-train and stores of ammunition from Delhi. He therefore halted until the 24th, when he made a short march forward to Sultan-Khanwala, and on the 25th advanced to Arufka, about nine miles further to north and east, throwing out one division to Mallanwala, some six miles to the east and due south of Sobraon. On the 6th of January 1846, the reinforcements began to come in, including the Ninth and Sixteenth Lancers, two regiments of native cavalry, two batteries of artillery, a company of sappers, the Tenth Foot and three native battalions. Therewith on the 12th Gough shifted his ground to eastward, so as the better to command the passages of the Sutlej, posting Harry Smith's division and Cureton's cavalry brigade on the right at Makhu, the main body in the centre over against the Sikh position of Sobraon, and the left at Attari, preserving communication with Ferozepore.

1845. Dec. 23. 1846. Jan.

Meanwhile, the Sikhs, observing that Gough had been brought for the present to a standstill, detached some eight thousand men with seventy guns under

1846. Jan. Ranjur Singh, which marched up the north bank of the Sutlej to Phillaur, about six miles north of Ludhiana, established a bridge under cover of an old fortress there, and crossed the river to threaten Gough's communications. They also threw garrisons into two small forts, Dharmkot and Fatehgarh, the one about twenty-five miles and the other about twelve miles to east of Gough's position and on the road between it and Ludhiana; and under cover of these they began to draw supplies from the left bank of the river, and to carry them over to the right bank. On the 16th, therefore, Gough ordered Harry Smith to take a brigade of infantry, a battery and two regiments of native horse to clear the enemy out of these strongholds; and Harry Smith, marching two hours before daylight of the 17th, found Fatehgarh abandoned. Pushing on at once to Dharmkot he reached it with his cavalry by 2 P.M., and after firing a few cannon-shot, received its surrender. Halting for a day after this long march, he received a further message from Gough that on the 19th he would be reinforced by additional cavalry and artillery, which would augment his force to the total strength of three regiments of horse, including the Sixteenth Lancers, and eighteen guns, besides his original brigade of infantry. With these he was ordered to move on Jagraon, some eighteen miles to south-east of Dharmkot, thence open communication with Bassian, ten miles to south, upon which place the battering train and an immense convoy were marching to join Gough; and above all he was to open communication with Ludhiana itself, twenty-six miles to the north-east, for Ranjur Singh was within seven miles of it though still on the north bank of the Sutlej. At Bassian he would find the Fifty-third Foot; at Ludhiana there was a garrison of one regiment of native cavalry, one battalion of native infantry, two Gurkha battalions and four guns, under Colonel Godby. All of these Smith was empowered to take under his command.

Smith accordingly, on the 19th, marched for Jagraon 1846.
where he arrived on the 20th and picked up the Jan.
Fifty-third, which he had ordered to meet him there.
The intelligence received at this place indicated that
Ranjur's force was still between Phillaur and Ludhiana,
some thirty miles away, but that the enemy had
occupied two forts, Baddowal, about eighteen miles
to the north-east, and a little to south of the main
road to Ludhiana, and Gangrana, about ten miles
due south of Baddowal, and had cavalry at both
places. Unwilling to give these parties the chance
of annoying him on both flanks, Smith decided to
move on Ludhiana by the road north of Baddowal,
and sent repeated instructions to Godby to meet him
with every man that he could spare at Suneth, about
midway between Baddowal and Ludhiana. Leaving
all wheeled transport and heavy baggage at Jagraon
under the guard of two companies of native infantry,
Smith resumed his march by moonlight at half-past
twelve on the morning of the 21st, and by sunrise Jan. 21.
was within two miles of Baddowal. Here a message
reached him from Godby that Ranjur had marched
from the vicinity of Ludhiana to Baddowal with his
whole force; and the villagers gave intelligence that
his strength had been considerably increased. Smith
had therefore to decide whether he would break through
the Sikhs, who would certainly have prepared a position
to stop him, or turn that position by a flank march and
so make his way to Ludhiana. He had with him the
Sixteenth Lancers, one regiment of regular and one
of irregular horse, the Thirty-first, which had lost
over three hundred officers and men at Mudki and
Ferozeshah, the Fifty-third, a young battalion, the
Twenty-fourth and Forty-seventh Native Infantry,
both very weak and further diminished by the two
companies left at Jagraon, and eighteen guns, two-
thirds of them light pieces of horse-artillery. Ranjur
was reported to have at least ten thousand men and
forty guns, and he could rest one flank of his line on

1846. the fortress of Baddowal. Smith could hardly hope
Jan. 21. to force his passage through the enemy without very heavy casualties; and, if he failed, not only was he lost but Godby at Ludhiana was lost also. Rightly judging that the relief of Godby was a matter of vital importance to himself, to Gough, and indeed to British rule in India, he decided to strike south and so, moving round Baddowal at about two miles distance, to make his way thus to Ludhiana.

Changing the order of his march, so that a single word of command would wheel his force into line to the left in battle-array, he led his troops on through the deep sand; and the Sikhs speedily set themselves in motion parallel to him. Travelling on roads while Smith's men were toiling through the sand, their column soon outstripped Smith's, and presently they opened a heavy fire of cannon upon Smith's infantry. A few shot fell among the transport, throwing the drivers into panic; and the Sikhs, taking advantage of the confusion, attacked the baggage-train and succeeded in carrying off a great part of it, including the sick and wounded. At one moment Ranjur pressed more closely, but was checked by the fire of Smith's guns, which were massed in rear; and then with great skill he drew out a line of seven battalions, with cannon in the intervals, across the rear of Smith's column, as if to attack in earnest. Smith willingly took up the challenge, and would have assailed this line had not his infantry been utterly exhausted. The cavalry and guns were therefore formed to screen the infantry, which gradually drew off in echelon of battalions until it had passed the village, Cureton manœuvring his three regiments of horse with admirable skill to cover the movement. The enemy dared not leave the village to encounter Smith in the open, and the column pursued its way unmolested to Ludhiana, the cavalry not coming in till 4 P.M., after sixteen hours under arms. The day had been

intensely hot, and the fatigue of the infantry was such 1846.
that many men were brought in on the horses of the Jan. 21.
troopers, or dragged into camp clinging to their stirrup-leathers. Some four hundred were missing, including those who had fallen in action, and though some two hundred straggled in during the next day or two, there was no doubt that the sick and prisoners would most of them be murdered. Altogether the men were disheartened and dispirited by the result of the day's work.[1]

Meanwhile not a sign had been found of Godby. He had been very urgent in his cries for relief, but had not held his troops ready for action; and on receiving Smith's instructions, he seems to have been slow and supine, for he did not move off until the firing began, and then, not knowing of Smith's change of route, took the wrong direction, ultimately returning to Ludhiana without firing a shot. However, after all Smith had effected his junction with him, and moreover, now lay across Ranjur's direct line of communication with Phillaur, compelling him to rely on a ford further down the Sutlej. Smith gave his men a day's rest, Jan. 22.
making every preparation to attack Ranjur at Baddowal; but Ranjur with sound judgement evacuated the place and marched northward towards the river, to meet reinforcements which were on their way to him. Smith, therefore, on the 23rd marched back to Baddowal and Jan. 23.
occupying it, halted there for some days; for Gough had ordered Wheeler's brigade, two regiments of native cavalry and four guns, to reinforce him from his own camp, besides the Shekawati brigade from Bassian, and had further directed Taylor's brigade to advance to Dharmkot and remain there in reserve. This last Smith ordered to return, feeling himself strong enough without them, for Godby had marched in on the 24th, leaving Ludhiana under a guard of invalids, and Wheeler on the 26th. Smith had now some twelve Jan. 26.

[1] See Reynard's *History of the Sixteenth Lancers.*

1846. thousand men,[1] with thirty-two guns under his command, and, after giving Wheeler's troops a day's rest, was ready to take the offensive.

His information was that Ranjur, after picking up a reinforcement of four thousand men—good soldiers trained by General Avitabile—would at dawn of the 29th move either on Jagraon, on Baddowal or on Ludhiana.

Jan. 29. Marching therefore at dawn of the 29th Smith struck north-westward, his cavalry in advance in contiguous columns of squadrons of regiments, with two batteries of horse-artillery in the intervals between brigades. In rear of the horse marched the infantry in contiguous columns of brigades at intervals of deploying distance, the open spaces being filled by artillery. A regiment of native cavalry was sent out wide to the eastward to watch for any hostile movement towards Baddowal or Ludhiana; but a spy, coming in two or three hours after the start, reported the Sikh army to be advancing on Jagraon. A march of eight or ten miles brought the force to the village of Porrain, at the top of a sandy ridge, and Smith, ascending to the roof of a house, caught sight of his enemy. At the foot of the ridge on which he stood was a level plain some two miles long and one mile wide; beyond it on a gentle rise were two villages, Aliwal, which was fortified, opposite his right, and Bhundri, masked only by a

[1] CAVALRY: Brigadier-general Cureton.

Macdowell's Brigade: 16th Lancers, 3rd Bengal L.C., 4th Irregular Cav.

Stedman's Brigade: Gov.-gen.'s Bodyguard, 1st and 5th Bengal L.C., Shekawati Cav.

HORSE ARTILLERY: (Major Laurenson) 3 batteries.

INFANTRY:

1st Brigade: H.M. 31st Foot; 24th and 47th Bengal N.I.
2nd „ *Wheeler*—H.M. 50th Foot; 48th Bengal N.I., Sirmur Battn. of Gurkhas.
3rd „ *Wilson*—H.M. 53rd Foot; 30th Bengal N.I.
4th „ *Godby*—36th Bengal N.I., Nasiri Battn. of Gurkhas.

2 Field batteries, 2 eight-inch howitzers.

thin grove of trees on his left; and between the two ran a curved line of entrenchments. The Sikhs were in motion, apparently heading for Jagraon, but at the sight of Smith's array they halted and occupied both villages and the entrenchment. Deploying his cavalry into line Smith continued his advance, and presently found himself clear of the sand and upon firm, grassy land. Therewith he ordered his two cavalry brigades to wheel off right and left so as to clear his front, and then deployed his infantry. Two brigades, Wheeler's on the right, Wilson's on the left, were in front line; echeloned in rear of them were Godby's brigade on the right and the Shekawati brigade on the left; and echeloned again well in rear of these were the two brigades of cavalry, Cureton's on the right and Macdowell's on the left. In this order Smith advanced as if on parade. Observing presently that his array was outflanked by the Sikh left, he wheeled his lines into column, took ground to his right, once again wheeled the columns into line and continued the forward movement. The sun shone brightly; there was no dust; every manœuvre was perfectly executed; and the twelve thousand men acted as one. Rarely has there been a more stately prelude to a general action. 1846. Jan. 29.

The British were apparently from six to seven hundred yards from the enemy when the Sikh guns opened fire from the whole length of their entrenchments. The shot at first fell short, but soon reached the British ranks as they marched forward; and Smith, now for the first time able to see something of what was before him, halted, in order to reconnoitre the enemy's position. The Sikhs had made the grave mistake of accepting battle with a river in their rear; and it was for Smith to take advantage of it. He decided first to bring up his right and carry the village of Aliwal, and, this done, to make a general attack on the Sikh centre and left. Summoning Godby's brigade, therefore, from the right rear, he launched it,

1846. Jan. 29. together with Hicks's brigade, against Aliwal and mastered it with little difficulty or loss, capturing two heavy guns. Therewith Smith ordered a general attack upon the Sikh centre and left, and Wheeler was soon hotly engaged. Ranjur, realising that his left was in extreme danger, if not actually turned, brought forward a large body of cavalry to cover the re-establishment of his position in that quarter; but these were instantly charged by Cureton and driven back in disorder upon their infantry. Determined to press his advantage to the utmost, Smith called the Shekawati brigade to the support of Cureton, and, being now on the summit of the high ground, he perceived the enemy's camp alongside the river to be full of infantry, and turned Godby's brigade against their left flank and rear. Godby carried everything before him; and Ranjur now realised that his retreat by the fords of the river was seriously menaced.

He therefore endeavoured to save himself by throwing back his left, and re-forming his line at right angles to the river, using the village of Bhundri, which was strongly fortified, as a pivot. To cover this manœuvre he again brought forward a body of horse, to counter which Macdowell sent against them a squadron of the Third Light Cavalry with another of the Sixteenth Lancers in support. The native regiment hesitated, whereupon the squadron of the Sixteenth, under Captain Bere, charged without them, crashed into the Sikhs and rode through and through them, hunting the fugitives towards the river. Rallying his men Bere returned to find his way blocked by Sikh infantry, who threw themselves into squares, or rather equilateral triangles, and received him with a volley at short range. In another minute the lancers had broken into them, and, though the Sikhs threw away their muskets and fought fiercely with sword and shield, they were utterly broken. Simultaneously another squadron of the Sixteenth, under Captain Fyler,

rode down another block of Sikh infantry, and the two squadrons re-formed and rallied together. Meanwhile Smith had thrown the two remaining squadrons of the Sixteenth, under Major Smyth, against an entrenched Sikh battery; and Smyth, galloping on under a terrific cannonade, captured every gun. The Sikh infantry in rear of the battery, after firing to the last, did not await the attack of the lancers, but boldly advanced to meet them with the sword, and closed with them in a bloody and determined struggle. These Sikh battalions, trained by Avitabile, fought, in fact, most gallantly; but the British infantry now came up to second the cavalry; and the village of Bhundri was cleared by the Fifty-third. Then two batteries of horse-artillery came up to complete the discomfiture of the Sikh foot. A last gallant band, from eight hundred to a thousand strong, which had rallied under shelter of the bank of a ravine, was dislodged by a flanking charge of the Thirtieth Native Infantry and blasted out of existence by the fire of twelve guns at close range. The entire Sikh force was in flight towards the ford by their camp, and in their rear and on both their flanks the British hemmed them in closer and closer, tearing them to pieces with their guns as they streamed away to the river. Ranjur had nine pieces unlimbered to cover the ford, but they were only fired once before the pursuers were upon them. Then the fugitives plunged into the river and into such boats as they had, in utter disorder under a tempest of shot and shell from the British cannon. Ranjur tried to bring away some of his guns, but two only reached the opposite bank, two more being left in mid-stream, and yet other two swallowed up by quicksands. He tried also to form some kind of line on the opposite bank, but this was speedily dissolved by a salvo from every piece of Smith's artillery. The Sikh host was driven headlong across the river in abject flight, with the loss of camp, baggage supplies, stores, and every one of their sixty-seven cannon.

1846. Jan. 29.

1846. Jan. 29. Thus brilliantly did Harry Smith end his little campaign, having accomplished as awkward a task as is often set to a general. For he was sent out with a small force to secure communication in one direction with Bassian, the route by which Gough's siege-train must arrive from Delhi and Ferozepore, and in another direction with Ludhiana, and in each place to collect a handful of troops which might help him to engage a greatly superior enemy. Ranjur Singh showed good judgement when he posted himself at Baddowal, threatening both Smith and Godby like a king between two pieces on a draught-board; and it speaks ill for the Sikh cavalry that they did not give Smith a great deal more trouble on the 21st. Then hardly had Smith arrived at Ludhiana than he had to rush back to Jagraon to pick up Wheeler's detachment, which by itself stood in danger of being overwhelmed. In fact he had to career about the triangle contained by Dharmkot, Ludhiana and Bassian, each side of it, roughly speaking, twenty-five miles long, gathering together detachments in the presence of a concentrated enemy. When at last he had all his men under his hand, he lost no time in marching to the attack.

With what numbers Ranjur Singh met him at Aliwal it is impossible to say. Smith speaks of thirty thousand men, others of forty thousand, but probably it is safest to take the lower figure and divide it by two. He had the good fortune not to find his enemy in so carefully prepared a position as Mudki and Ferozeshah, and he hit the weak point at once. Having struck it, he concentrated eight of his eleven battalions and three of his six regiments of horse upon the enemy's left, leaving Wheeler's three battalions and Macdowell's three cavalry regiments to deal with his centre and right. The result was that the losses of Wheeler and Macdowell alone made up more than three-fifths of the casualty list, and the Sixteenth Lancers alone made up more than one-fourth of it. Their charges of two isolated squadrons first, then

of the two remaining squadrons acting together, and finally of the whole regiment, were the most brilliant feature of the action; and Harry Smith seems to have timed them perfectly, so as to shatter Ranjur Singh's last hopes of maintaining the fight. In fact it was a masterly stroke, but it cost the regiment the price of one hundred and forty-four officers and men, fifty-eight of whom were killed outright. Of the other troops engaged the Fiftieth suffered the most heavily, but their casualties did not exceed seventy-three; and indeed those of the whole force amounted only to five hundred and eighty-nine, one-third of them killed. The Sikhs admitted a loss of three thousand killed. Putting the Sixteenth Lancers aside, it is seldom that casualties are so evenly distributed among all units as those of Aliwal; and the point held up by the Duke of Wellington to especial admiration was Harry Smith's utilisation of all three arms to the greatest possible advantage of each. Altogether Aliwal was a well-managed little affair. 1846. Jan. 29.

The moral effect of the victory was very great. Mudki and Ferozeshah had been costly successes, the latter not very far removed from failure, and the sepoys shrank more and more from meeting the Sikhs. Now, however, the dreaded enemy had been not only defeated but harried, hunted and humiliated. To Gough, who with good reason had been miserably anxious about Harry Smith's expedition, the news of Aliwal, first heralded by the sound of the guns, came as an untold relief. He was, we are told, "nearly frantic with joy," but instantly restrained himself, and fell humbly on his knees to give God the glory. His situation was now much easier. The Sikhs had at once evacuated all their posts south of the Sutlej except their fortified position at Sobraon; his communications were secure, and the safe arrival of his siege-train was assured. On the 3rd of February, Harry Smith, having with much trouble disposed of his captured guns, marched back to rejoin the army, Feb.

1846. and reaching it on the 8th was enthusiastically received
Feb. 9. by all ranks. On the 9th Gough summoned his subordinate commanders to explain to them his plan of attack.

The position of the Sikhs at Sobraon was formidable. It consisted of a strongly fortified enceinte, containing a kind of inner citadel, skilfully adjusted to a re-entrant bend of the river. The southern front was about a mile and three-quarters long, the eastern front about half-a-mile, and the western about a mile, both of the last abutting northward upon the Sutlej. A bridge of boats connected this work with the northern bank, which was higher than the southern, and on this northern bank works had been constructed to enfilade not only the northern egress from the bridge, but also the eastern and western fronts. In rear of these upon commanding ground was arrayed the force not required to hold the entrenchments, with numerous artillery. To put matters briefly, the Sikhs were drawn up in rear of a very broad and impassable ditch, with a strongly fortified outwork on the other side of that ditch, which outwork, together with all the approaches to it, was commanded by the main position. The vice of such a disposition is obvious enough; but none the less the problem of a successful attack upon it was not easy of solution.

As there were plenty of boats at Ferozepore, Hardinge suggested that these should be used to carry the bulk of the infantry and fifty guns over the river, under cover of darkness, to Ganda Singhwala, on the opposite bank, and that this force, moving up the northern bank, should fall upon the flank of the main Sikh position by surprise, seize the commanding ground, and so render the outwork untenable. Gough objected to this plan on the ground that such a flanking movement would lay open his communications; and Hardinge did not press it. There was nothing for it, therefore, but a direct attack; and it was hoped that since the siege-train was on the spot and Gough had

now fifteen thousand men [1] under his hand, the task would not strain his resources to excess. The artillery officers declared at first that eighteen heavy howitzers and five eighteen-pounders would in an hour or two render the outwork untenable, and clear the way for a successful assault by infantry; but after closer examination of the fortifications they changed their opinion and pronounced such an attack to be impracticable. Dissatisfied with this report Hardinge consulted Major Henry Lawrence, the political agent, who had been originally in the artillery, and Major Abbott of the Engineers, who—such is human nature

1846. Feb. 9.

[1] CAVALRY DIVISION: Major-general Sir Joseph Thackwell.

1st Brigade: (Scott) H.M. 3rd L.D.; 4th and 5th Bengal L.C., 9th Irregular Cav.
2nd „ (Campbell) H.M. 9th Lancers; 2nd Irregular Cav.
3rd „ Gov.-gen.'s Bodyguard.
4th „ (Cureton) H.M. 16th Lancers; 3rd Bengal L.C., 4th Irregular Cav.

ARTILLERY:

9 Horse-artillery batteries.
3 Field-artillery nine-pounder batteries.
2 Field-artillery twelve-pounder batteries.
6 eighteen-pounders.
18 heavy howitzers and mortars.

INFANTRY:

1st Division: Harry Smith.
1st Brigade Hicks. H.M. 31st; 47th Bengal N.I.
2nd „ Penny. H.M. 50th; 42nd Bengal N.I., Nasiri Battn.

2nd Division: Gilbert.
3rd Brigade Taylor. H.M. 29th; 41st and 68th Bengal N.I.
4th „ Maclaren. 1st Bengal Europ. (102nd); 16th N.I., Sirmur Battn.

3rd Division: Dick.
5th Brigade Ashburnham. H.M. 9th; H.M. 62nd; 26th N.I.
6th „ Wilkinson. H.M. 80th; 33rd and 63rd N.I.
7th „ Stacey. H.M. 10th; H.M. 53rd; 43rd and 59th N.I.
Detached Brigade. 4th, 5th and 73rd N.I.

1846. —disagreed with their colleagues and advocated the
Feb. 9. attack. Gough was, therefore, free to fight, as he wished, a general action.

He decided that the western front offered the most favourable point for attack, and he accordingly massed nineteen out of his twenty-four heavy pieces, including the whole of his eighteen-pounders, over against the south-western angle, assigning to Dick's division the duty of the assault. The centre, or southern front, was assigned to Gilbert's division, and the right, or eastern front, to Harry Smith's, the remainder of the heavy guns being posted between these two divisions opposite the south-eastern angle. Of the cavalry, Scott's brigade was drawn up in rear of Dick, who was further supported by three battalions of native infantry; and Campbell's brigade was posted in rear of Harry Smith's division. Cureton's brigade was detached to make a diversion by simulating an attempt to cross the Sutlej at Harike, about three miles up the river from Sobraon. The batteries of field- and horse-artillery extended the heavy batteries into a semi-circle embracing the greater part of the perimeter of the enemy's works, the light howitzers being massed off the south-eastern angle at the village of Chota Sobraon.[1]

Feb. 10. At three o'clock on the morning of the 10th the troops got under arms in silence and moved off to their appointed positions. A dense mist forbade all operations for some hours, but by 6.30 A.M. it had cleared, and therewith the whole of the British artillery opened fire. The cannonade was not as effective as it should have been. The shells thrown by the mortars burst in the air, their fuses being too short; the

[1] It is impossible to say how many guns Gough had with him. There were too few gunners for the heavy ordnance, so those of three, if not four, horse-batteries were borrowed, and these batteries were left in camp. When the ammunition for the heavy pieces failed, Hardinge sent for these horse-batteries which were brought up by their drivers only, picked up their gunners and came into action late. See *Buckle*, p. 512, *note*.

eighteen-pounders were emplaced at too long range to do much damage; and, as a climax, after two hours' firing the ammunition of the heavy pieces failed. Gough complained that his orders as to the supply had not been obeyed; the gunners retorted that insufficient time had been allowed them for preparation; and, since the siege-train only reached Gough's camp on the 8th, the plea may be justified. Whatever the cause, ammunition failed, and at about 8.30 Gough was informed that the heavy pieces must cease fire. The gallant old man received the news in a fashion which effectively banished any discouragement in the army. "Thank God," he cried to the officer who brought the unwelcome message, "then I'll be at them with the bayonet," and he ordered Dick's division to attack at once. Then came a curious incident. An officer arrived with a message from Hardinge at Ferozepore to the effect that, if Gough did not feel confident of success without great loss, he had better withdraw the troops and work up to the enemy's entrenchments by regular approaches. It seems that this officer, though a brave and honourable man, was incapable of comprehending the true purport of any order, for he had made a similar mistake on the night of the first day of Ferozeshah. Hardinge's actual message was that, if Sir Hugh doubted the issue, he might exercise his discretion, but that if he only apprehended severe loss, he might go on. Even this might well have been spared to a Commander-in-chief who had already begun his action; but the false message was delivered in its stead, and, moreover, was thrice repeated. Gough, losing patience at last, silenced the messenger with the words, "Tell Sir Robert Dick to move on, in the name of God!" 1846. Feb.

Accordingly at 9 A.M., Dick opened his attack with Stacey's brigade in line, the Tenth being on the right, the Fifty-third on the left, with the Forty-third and Fifty-ninth Native Infantry between them. On their flanks two field-batteries and one horse-battery galloped

1846. Feb. 10. out to successive positions until they closed to within three hundred yards of the enemy's heavy guns. The fire of the Sikhs from cannon, wall-pieces and muskets was terrific, but Stacey's brigade, moving steadily forward, stormed the entrenchments and drove the Sikhs in confusion from their guns upon the inner entrenchments. Then speedily the enemy recovered themselves and, being in great force, counter-attacked with the greatest determination. Gough ordered Wilkinson to the support of Stacey, and Ashburnham to the support of Wilkinson, and directed Gilbert and Smith to throw out their light troops and make demonstrations along the whole length of the Sikh entrenchments. The Sikhs took not the slightest notice of these feints, but turned all their efforts against Dick. Gradually the three brigades were forced back, disputing every inch of ground, but unable to maintain themselves, until the Sikhs finally drove them from their batteries and recaptured their guns. The assault of Dick's division had failed, and therewith Gough's original plan of action had been brought to naught.

He had no alternative but to convert the feints of Gilbert and Smith into real attacks; and the Sikhs, relieved from the pressure upon their right, flew to their centre and left to take up the challenge. "Good God, they'll be annihilated," exclaimed Gough, as he watched Gilbert's men preparing for the assault. His forebodings were justified. Taylor's and Maclaren's brigades, rushing forward to the ditch, found the rampart too high to be ascended without scaling ladders, and were driven back with heavy loss, Taylor and Maclaren being both of them killed. A second attempt equally failed; and on the extreme right Harry Smith had fared little better. In that quarter Hicks's brigade led the assault, and was thrice driven back with heavy loss, the Thirty-first, weak through its casualties in former actions, losing one hundred and fifty men. Harry Smith was ready with Penny's brigade to restore

the fight; and the steadiness of the Fiftieth, which formed fours, as if on parade, to allow the shattered fragments of Hicks's brigade to pass through them, and as calmly re-formed line, all under heavy fire, was enough to give any commander confidence. But it was all that Smith could do for half-an-hour to hold his own within the enemy's entrenchments, and for a full hour the issue of the fight was in the gravest doubt. 1846. Feb. 10.

But the distraction of the Sikhs from their right to their centre and left had enabled Dick's men to rally and renew their attack with success; and Gilbert's brigades, making another assault, at last penetrated into the entrenchments, the men hoisting each other up to the embrasures in default of ladders. Finally, on the enemy's right the sappers cleared a way over ditches and parapets, and Thackwell, passing his cavalry in single file into the entrenchments, let loose the Third Light Dragoons, who once again galloped over batteries and field-works, cutting down all who dared to withstand them. Then the Sikhs began to give way, slowly and stubbornly, yielding to steady pressure from three sides, which forced them back upon their bridge of boats. By a strange fatality the Sutlej had risen seven feet in the night, so that the fords were impassable, and the centre boat of the bridge—whether to check pursuit or to force the Sikhs to fight by denying them retreat—had been removed. Many grey-bearded old chiefs stood up to the last, waving their swords, and were killed; many of their men nobly emulated their example; but at last came the inevitable rush for the bridge. The Sikh cavalry had cut up the British wounded as they lay on the ground, and the victors were in no mood of mercy. The sides of the bridge gave way, and the fugitives were driven by thousands into the water, where the British guns played on them relentlessly with grape and shrapnel. Before noon the action was over. From eight to ten thousand Sikhs had perished; every

1846. Feb. 10. gun of theirs had been captured; and the power of the arrogant Khalsa had been broken.

The casualties in Gough's force amounted to two thousand two hundred and eighty-three of all ranks, of whom three hundred and twenty were killed. Among these last were Sir Robert Dick, a veteran of the Peninsula, and the Brigadiers Taylor and Maclaren; among the wounded were Gilbert and Brigadier-general Penny. The losses were far more evenly distributed among the British and the Indian battalions than in any previous action of the war, for the sepoys had learned the lesson of Aliwal and fought well. It was in Harry Smith's division that the difference between the two was most strongly marked, for the Fiftieth counted two hundred and thirty-nine casualties, the Thirty-first, who went into action only four hundred strong, one hundred and fifty-four, and the three native battalions put together, two hundred and twenty-three. In Taylor's brigade of Gilbert's division, the Twenty-ninth claimed one hundred and eighty-seven casualties out of four hundred and two, and in Maclaren's brigade the Hundred and Second one hundred and ninety-seven out of four hundred and ninety-five. The three brigades of Dick's division suffered most lightly of all, the Tenth counting one hundred and thirty-two killed and wounded, the Fifty-third nearly as many, the Forty-third Native Infantry just over one hundred, and the remainder all under, and most of them considerably under, one hundred. Nevertheless the sepoys did their duty, and the two battalions of Gurkhas greatly distinguished themselves. But for this fact Gough's assault at Sobraon would undoubtedly have failed.

It is difficult to know what judgement to pass upon the action. There was certainly mismanagement of the heavy artillery, particularly of the eighteen-pounders, which, if properly handled, should have levelled a great part of the enemy's entrenchments and dismounted at least some of their guns; but whether this were the fault of the chiefs of artillery or of Gough himself, it is

impossible to say. Possibly the fact that Hardinge invoked junior officers of engineers and artillery to overrule the opinion of seniors did not make for hearty and united effort. But Harry Smith declared further that Gough chose the wrong point of attack, and that, having chosen it, he massed insufficient troops before it to make the assault successful. There seems to be more point in the first part of this criticism than in the second, for Stacey's brigade appears to have gained its original footing in the Sikh entrenchments without any extraordinary effort, though the whole division failed to make that footing good. Harry Smith was undoubtedly the first to establish himself in the Sikh position; and to all intent his attack and that of Gilbert gave time to Dick's division to recover itself and make their second and successful attempt. Not until both of these had carried the first line could either of Gilbert's brigades make the slightest impression; and this does not suggest a happy direction of the fight. But the storming of a fortified position defended by resolute troops and a powerful artillery must always be a hazardous business; and Gough was undoubtedly right in making a direct attack when his enemy was so incautious as to accept battle with an impassable river in his rear. Manœuvring, such as that suggested by Hardinge, might have turned the Sikhs out of their position at Sobraon at less cost, if that operation be reckoned with alone; but the campaign would have been prolonged; and the sum total of casualties at its end might have exceeded those incurred by the single decisive action. Gough may have lost many men, possibly more than he ought, but he did end the war at a blow. 1846. Feb. 10.

Directly that the battle was over Gough began to make his arrangements for crossing the Sutlej, and on the 12th and 13th the main body of the army passed the river, leaving three brigades of infantry and one of cavalry to escort the sick, the baggage and the sixty-seven guns captured from the Sikhs. On the night of

1846. Feb. the 12th the advanced guard occupied the fort of Kasur, some twelve miles north-west of Ferozepore; on the 13th the rest of the force moved up to them; and on the 14th Gholab Singh, a chief chosen because he had refused to join in hostilities against the British, arrived to negotiate for peace. Hardinge was ready enough to come to terms. The Sikh army, though heavily punished, had not been annihilated, and they had safely brought away twenty-five guns which, during the action of Sobraon, had been in position on the north side of the river. Complete conquest, to be followed by annexation, would have involved many sieges and a petty warfare which would have protracted operations into the hot season. Hardinge and Gough agreed that they could afford neither the men nor the money for such a campaign. Sir Charles Napier had collected twelve thousand men at Bahawalpur, and was thirsting for action. It was one of the great disappointments of his life that he had not been called to play his part in the war; but still Hardinge and Gough shrank from pressing their advantage. The truth seems to be that they did not feel too confident as to the result. The four actions of Mudki, Ferozeshah, Aliwal and Sobraon, alone had cost well over six thousand casualties, and of these over thirty-four hundred had fallen upon the Europeans. Other petty affairs and sickness must have swelled that number to nearly four thousand; and the effective strength of the three British cavalry regiments and the eight British battalions with Gough can never have been above nine thousand. Practically, therefore, the European portion of the force had been reduced by nearly one-half, and the loss of officers had been specially severe. No doubt financial considerations also weighed heavily with Hardinge; but the military arguments in favour of peace were of themselves sufficiently cogent. It seems little of an exaggeration to say that Gough's soldiers had been fought to a standstill.

The terms laid down by Hardinge were the cession

of the territory between the Beas and the Sutlej, known as the Jullundur Doab, and an indemnity of half-a-million sterling, or, as an equivalent, the districts of Kashmir and Hazara. Further, the Sikhs pledged themselves to yield up the twenty-five guns which they had succeeded in saving, and to restrict the numbers of their army to twenty-five battalions of infantry and twelve thousand cavalry. Within a few hours Gholab Singh accepted these conditions. On the 18th the army resumed its march on Lahore; on the 20th entered the Sikh capital; and on the 8th of March the treaty was signed. Hardinge received a viscounty and Gough a barony, each with a pension, for their services; and so ended, nominally, the First Sikh War. 1846. Mar. 8.

CHAPTER XXXV

The course of our history now leads us to wholly new ground. Mention has been made of the penal settlement founded in Botany Bay in 1788, and of the independent companies, known as Grose's Corps, which were raised for the preservation of order therein. With the accumulation of convicts it became necessary to augment this corps, until, in 1809, it grew into a regiment and was taken into the Line as the Hundred and Second. It had not yet attained to this new dignity when, through a most extraordinary incident, it fell into disgrace. The Governor of the settlement since August 1806 had been William Bligh, the naval officer who enjoys a doubtful fame through the mutiny of the *Bounty*. He was so tyrannical, arbitrary and capricious that it is only charitable to suppose that he was mad; but, however that may be, it is certain that in January 1808, Major Johnston, who commanded the troops at Sydney, received an address from the most respectable of the inhabitants praying him to put Bligh under arrest. He did so without hesitation, proclaimed martial law, and assumed all the functions of government. In those days letters took long to reach England, and not until the last day of December 1809, did despatches arrive at Sydney which announced the decision of the government upon the whole transaction. They were carried by Colonel Macquarie of the Seventy-third, who was accompanied by a strong detachment of his regiment and two men-of-war. Castlereagh, who was then in charge of the War

Department, was evidently inclined to take no risks. 1809.

Macquarie's instructions were to release Bligh, to reinstate him for twenty-four hours and then to take his place as his successor; and to send Johnston at once under strict arrest to England, whither his regiment was shortly to follow him. On reaching home Johnston was tried by court-martial, found guilty of mutiny and cashiered. It seems that the court was anxious in any event to stigmatise the removal of the King's representative, no matter how unworthy or indeed rascally, by a military subordinate, as a crime that could not be excused nor overlooked; and herein, no doubt, it reflected the views of the Commander-in-chief, who saw the danger of any other course. The Prince Regent, in confirming the sentence, pronounced it inadequate to the enormity of the offence, and hinted that the court must have found extraordinary circumstances of extenuation to incline them to such leniency. This the court certainly had; and when Bligh, exulting in his apparent victory, wished to push it further, he was informed that neither the needs of the public service nor the ends of justice called for more notice of the mutiny at Botany Bay. Johnston returned to New South Wales where he ended his days universally respected, and the officers of his regiment were removed to other corps. Thus it was that one of the older regiments of the Line first found its way to the Antipodes.[1]

The work required of the troops in Australia was that of police, in hunting down bushrangers and predatory blacks, rather than strictly military; and in due time Governor Sir Thomas Brisbane recognised the fact by forming in 1825 a body of mounted police, recruited from the choicest men in the ranks of the regiment serving in the Colony, with officers drawn from the same source. Their position was peculiar,

[1] The whole incident is narrated at great length in Rusden's *History of Australia*, i. 436-491.

for their names remained on the regimental roll as supernumeraries, and, when their own regiment left the Colony, they were transferred to the roll of the relieving regiment, so that they remained always under military discipline, and, if unsatisfactory, could be sent back to the ranks. But this can have happened seldom; for the corps during the twenty-five years of its life, was of supreme excellence, every man keeping the highest standard of duty before him. Good horsemen, travelling far and wide, they knew every mountain-path and every track; they never wearied in the chase of evil-doers, and would face any odds when they brought them to bay. "Their deeds of daring," says the historian of the Colony, "in the capture of bushrangers would form a narrative as stirring as any romance." No body of men has reflected greater honour upon the British Army.[1]

But no more than eleven hundred miles, south and east of Australia, lies another still more favoured land to which a Dutch explorer, Tasman, in 1642, gave the name of New Zealand, though, as its historian justly claims, it should rightly be called Maoria. The Maoris, according to their own tradition, migrated thither, apparently at about the time of our Norman conquest, in large canoes from the Sandwich Islands, and by the nineteenth century were spread over the whole length and breadth of the North Island, though but sparsely in the South Island, perhaps owing to its greater remoteness from the Equator and consequently less genial climate. They were a strange mixture of civilisation and savagery. They had no metals, yet by steady labour and dogged industry they ground the intensely hard green jade of the country into tools and weapons, and with these they built houses and canoes, which they decorated with elaborate carving; while their women, with equal toil, prepared the native flax and wove it into garments. They were

[1] Rusden, *History of Australia*, i. 576-577. There is a vivid sketch of an officer and his men in Henry Kingsley's *Geoffrey Hamlyn*.

cannibals, yet they were essentially an agricultural people, and more scrupulous in sanitary matters than many Europeans. Dark skinned, though often not more so than the Portuguese, straight-haired, tall and athletic, with singular dignity of bearing, they were proud and bloodthirsty, as befits a race which lives only for warfare; but they had also remarkable power of oratory, and they passed from mouth to mouth a great body of heroic poems celebrating the great deeds of their ancestors. Withal they observed a certain sense of chivalry. They would supply an enemy with food to enable him to continue in the field, and would fix time and place, which were faithfully observed, for a hostile meeting. They possessed a singular gift for the choice of strong positions, and very remarkable skill in fortifying them with ditches, embankments and palisades. But all their fighting was hand to hand, and they had no missile weapons. No one chief had ever succeeded in subjecting all the tribes to his rule; and these two things were their undoing.

The first Englishman to visit them was Captain Cook in the year 1769. He found some tribes hostile and was obliged in self-defence to shoot one or two Maoris, but he made friends with others, with whom he renewed relations on a second visit in 1774. Later in the century other roving Englishmen, whalers and traders, found their way to New Zealand, and began to traffic with the Maoris, selling them fire-arms; and gradually there arose a frantic competition among the chiefs to obtain these new weapons; for a tribe that possessed them not was doomed to extinction. This attracted every description of ruffian to New Zealand, and outrages upon the Maoris followed, which in 1814 caused Governor Macquarie to issue a proclamation threatening the punishment of such evil-doers. In the same year the first English missionary sailed from Sydney to the Bay of Islands; and in 1817 an Act was passed by the Imperial Parliament

1769.

1814.

1817. to repeat the denunciations of Macquarie—the first sign of imperial intervention in New Zealand's affairs. But the country continued to be the resort of the scum of the British Isles; and the state of affairs among these lawless adventurers became so scandalous that, after much hesitation, the British government decided to exercise some kind of jurisdiction over them. In
1840. January 1840, Captain Hobson of the Royal Navy arrived in the Bay of Islands from Sydney with the title of Lieutenant-governor.

It was in that same year that British troops were first seen in New Zealand. With the increase of its not wholly desirable population the garrison of New South Wales had been gradually augmented to more than two thousand men, under the command of a Major-general, and in the decade from 1834 to 1844 its average strength was twenty-five hundred. Of this force Governor Gipps was authorised to keep one hundred men as a permanent garrison in New Zealand; and in April 1840, he sent over eighty of that number. But an application to allow more than one hundred men to remain there was refused by the Imperial government in April 1841; Ministers being, as usual, terrified at the prospect of further calls upon the British Army when it was already entangled in the operations in Afghanistan, with every likelihood that it would shortly be engaged in China also. Circumstances, however, were too strong for them. In September 1842, the dole of soldiers for New Zealand was doubled from one hundred to two hundred men.
1843. In August 1843 Gipps sent over fifty men of this additional allowance, and in the same month it was decided that a man-of-war should be kept permanently in New Zealand waters. Whatever the reluctance of the Cabinet and Parliament, the new possession could not be denied its toll of blue-jackets and of red-coats.

It would be tedious to recount the various stages by which Queen Victoria's sovereignty was extended

over Maoris and Europeans until it embraced both islands of New Zealand, even more tedious to recount the disputes that arose between Governor Hobson and divers individuals and corporations who professed to have bought land from the Maoris. It must suffice to say, first, that the land belonged not to the chief but to the tribe and could not be alienated without the consent of every member of the tribe; and, secondly, that the North Island being convulsed with tribal wars, chiefs would promise almost anything in return for fire-arms and ammunition, the lack of them meaning to them little less than annihilation. For these they paid chiefly in flax[1] laboriously scraped with shells; and, as the demand for this commodity, stimulated by their own needs, increased, they moved their dwellings from the uplands to the marshy ground where the raw material grows, and so, as was thought by a good judge, suffered physical deterioration. But English traders and speculators were greedy for something less troublesome than flax, and, taking little account of Maori laws and customs, they claimed rightful ownership of large tracts of land which they had purchased at the price of a few muskets and barrels of powder. On the other hand, a chief of guile, or his European friends for him, could always plead that a contract of sale was invalid because it lacked the assent of some member of the tribe. In spite of many efforts to settle this question of land, it was only a matter of time before English and Maoris should come to blows, and in fact they did so on the 17th of June 1843, at what was called the massacre of the Wairau, when four Maoris and nineteen English met their deaths. The chiefs con- 1843.

[1] No one who has not resided in New Zealand can realise how far the native flax (*Phormium tenax*) enters into the daily business of life. In gardens, for instance, there is no occasion for bass. You have a plant or two of flax and cut off strips of it, as you want them, to tie up flowers and vegetables. For any temporary repairs a strip of flax will take the place of string; and I have seen the sling of a cartridge-bag efficiently replaced by a leaf of flax cut on the spot.

1843. cerned were named Rauparaha and Rangihaeata,[1] both of them powerful in the vicinity of the present capital, Wellington, with whom we shall presently have more to do.

The immediate result of the massacre was that a handful of soldiers of the Ninety-sixth was sent to Wellington, but meanwhile New Zealand was without a Governor, for Hobson had died; and it was not until November 1843, that another naval officer, Captain Fitzroy, arrived to succeed him. By that time Maori resentment against English encroachments had spread to the north, and a chief named Heke, in the vicinity of the Bay of Islands, was asking the ominous question if Rauparaha was to have the honour of killing all the foreigners. The English were scattered about in many small settlements too far apart for mutual support, and there could be little doubt that, if the Maoris chose with one mind to turn upon them, they could exterminate them with little difficulty; for the force of regular troops, which had its head-quarters at Auckland, was trifling in strength, and could move only by sea from settlement to settlement. However, things remained
1844. fairly quiet until July 1844, when Heke, upon pretext
July. of an insult offered by a Maori woman who was living with an Englishman in the Bay of Islands, entered the settlement of Russell in that place, plundered one or two houses, carried off the woman and cut down the flag-staff on which was flying the Union flag. Some evilly disposed persons had told them that the flag symbolised slavery to himself and to his countrymen; and, probably attributing to it some sinister, magical influence, he had naturally resolved to put an end to it.

[1] Maori is pronounced as if it were Italian. The language has five vowels, a, e, i, o, u; one aspirate, h, one labial, p, one dental, t, three liquids, m, n, r, one guttural, k, one nasal sound which cannot be expressed in our letters and is written ng. There is no sibilant, and every word ends with a vowel. Maori corruptions of English names are therefore a little difficult to recognise. George Grey becomes Hori Kerei; John becomes Honi; Walker becomes Waka. The Maori word for a hand-gun is *tupara*, a corruption of two-barrel.

That, according to the English view, he was insulting the national honour of England can never have occurred to him, nor probably could such an idea have been conveyed to him except in terms of Maori thought, which would have been very widely different from English. 1844. July.

However, the thing was done, and Fitzroy was not a little alarmed. The settlement of Russell could have furnished about one hundred able-bodied and armed Europeans, who, if properly organised and entrenched, might have sufficed to repel a regular attack, though they could not defend the whole area of a straggling settlement. Fitzroy, therefore, applied to Sir George Gipps at Sydney for reinforcements, and Gipps at once sent off one hundred and seventy officers and men of the Ninety-ninth, two six-pounder field-guns and a supply of muskets and ammunition, in which last was included flints. It seems that the new percussion-muskets had not yet reached the distant garrison of Australia. The troops from Sydney reached the Bay of Islands in the third week of August, where Fitzroy met them in person on the 25th. The demonstration had its effect. Heke expressed contrition, and the excitement for the present died down. But French and American traders continued to make mischief among the Maoris, repeating that, so long as the British flag waved, they would be oppressed, and eventually enslaved. The French, of course, took this line in revenge for Waterloo, and the Americans from the hatred which all human creatures bear towards those whom they have injured. But foreigners were by no means the sole nor even the greatest danger. There had been wild speculation by the English in the land of New Zealand, and the collapse had come. No one had any money. No revenue could be gathered by the government. Officials, whose salaries exceeded eighty pounds a year, were receiving but half of their due, and even that in a local paper currency. There was general depression and discontent, and there was no lack of Aug.

1844. scoundrels who might thereby be driven to violence. There was great bitterness among the settlers against the natives, and the peril was lest the Maoris, in return for injuries received from rogues, should take vengeance upon the innocent. In the circumstances Fitzroy pleaded earnestly for increase both of the military and the naval force. He dared not, in the present state of feeling, form the settlers into a militia; but a regiment of the line would hearten the well-disposed and law-abiding of all races.[1]

Matters remained quiet until the end of 1844, and then trouble began anew. On the 10th of January
1845. 1845, Heke again cut down the flagstaff at Russell;
Jan. and, though he did no further damage, there were mutterings among his tribe that the British rule should be swept away and that that of the United States should take its place. The American traders could supply good fire-arms, better indeed than those in the hands of the British troops, and the fact lent great strength to their influence among the Maoris. More than this, there was unrest in the south as well as in the north of the North Island. Wellington was menaced by Maori aggression from the wooded valley of the Hutt river, which flows into the head of Wellington harbour. Fitzroy saw no remedy but to prepare for active military operations in that quarter also, and on the 25th of January wrote to ask Gipps for another two hundred men and some light field-pieces. Great disaster might be anticipated, he wrote to England a month later, unless troops were sent out. Heke throughout February threatened and occasionally robbed outlying houses, and in March
Mar. 11. the disaster came. At sunrise of the 11th Heke and his warriors attacked Russell and caught the settlers off their guard. The regular garrison consisted of two officers and forty men of the Ninety-sixth, twenty of whom were ensconced in a little blockhouse

[1] Fitzroy to Sec. of State, 20 Aug. (with enclosures), 14, 16 Sept., 19 Oct., 19 Dec. 1844.

on a hill overlooking the shore; but all of these last, except four men, had left their shelter to dig entrenchments, and the four were at once surprised and killed. The remainder, together with some seamen and marines of the King's ship *Hazard*, who had been landed to throw up earth-works, withstood the main attack of the Maoris with success; and resistance was prolonged until after noon, when a magazine in the town exploded. Then there seems to have been a panic among the settlers. The senior naval officer had been disabled by a wound. The ensign in command of the detachment of the Ninety-ninth had proved himself to be not very efficient; and the resident magistrate took upon himself to order the evacuation of Russell. The troops and the whole of the settlers were safely brought away by the *Hazard* and by an American frigate, whose commander generously gave all possible help; and the Maoris burned and plundered the settlement. The British casualties did not exceed thirty-six, while those of Heke's men were twice as great; but the Maoris held that they had defeated the British troops and were greatly elated. "We shall want two regiments and three men-of-war," wrote Fitzroy in reporting the affair, "for the next two or three years." [1] 1845. Mar. 11.

Meanwhile, since it would probably be a year before reinforcements could arrive from England, the Governor appealed for help to the commanders of the East Indian and Pacific squadrons, as well as to Gipps at Sydney, and raised a militia in New Zealand. Had the settlers been collected together in one district, they could with ease have held their own; but being dispersed in small groups all over the North Island and part of the South Island, there was always the danger lest they should be overwhelmed in detail. Gipps, always helpful, had already despatched in the first days of March two companies of the Fifty-eighth in the Queen's ship *North Star*, which reached Auckland on the 25th of March; and on the 22nd of April there

[1] Fitzroy to Sec. of State, 24 Feb., 25 Mar. 1845.

1845. April. arrived further the head-quarters of the Fifty-eighth, two hundred strong, at Auckland, besides half a company which at about the same time landed at Wellington. On the 27th of April Fitzroy sent four companies of the Fifty-eighth and Ninety-sixth, together with forty volunteers, to the Bay of Islands, under command of Colonel Hulme of the Ninety-sixth; the troops were landed there on the 30th; and on the 3rd of May began the first Maori campaign.

May. The objective was a *pa*, or fortified post, occupied by Heke, but belonging to another rebel chief, Kawiti, at Okaihau, perhaps ten miles from the sea. The force, four hundred strong, could obtain no transport of any kind, so Hulme loaded his men with five days' biscuit, two days' cooked meat, and thirty extra rounds of ammunition in their haversacks, and marched at noon on the 3rd. Before nightfall heavy rain came on, and Hulme, thinking of the health of his men, returned at once to the coast by the Keri Keri river, where there was a mission-station which afforded shelter. The five days' biscuit and the thirty additional rounds were ruined by the rain, which continued for forty-eight hours, but the captain of the *North Star* sent more supplies up the river, and on the 6th Hulme made a fresh start. He was again stopped by rain, and this time took refuge in the *pa* of a friendly Maori, Waka Nene, who built shelter for the troops within it. Talking matters over with this chief, Hulme told him that he proposed to force an entrance into Heke's stronghold by pulling down the palisades. Waka answered that this would be madness and would mean the sacrifice of all assailants; so Hulme, therefore, with several of his officers, went to reconnoitre the place for himself at a distance of about a mile. He could see without teaching, its great strength; and Europeans, who had been within it, warned him that there were three rows of stockading, each of trees a foot in diameter, with traverses and deep holes dug for shelter. They seemed to think, however, that the

defences might be breached by field-artillery, of which Hulme had none. He had, however, a few rockets, and with these he resolved to try his fortune. 1845. May.

Dividing his little force into three columns and a reserve, he sent the three columns to appointed positions within two hundred yards of the *pa*, with strict injunctions not to move without further order. Examining the works more closely Hulme convinced himself of the hopelessness of an assault, unless they were breached, and was about to order the columns to retire, when they became engaged with a body of Maoris under the chief, Kawiti, who were lying in wait to attack their rear as soon as they should assault. These had been discovered by Waka Nene's people, and were speedily charged and driven off. But suddenly, by signal of a flag, they returned to their attack, while two hundred of Heke's men simultaneously sallied out of the *pa* to engage the English on another front. The latter were easily repulsed, but Kawiti's men charged up to the bayonets and suffered heavily before they gave way. Even so they actually made a third attack as the columns were retiring, and needed a third repulse before they finally gave up the fight. Hulme's casualties amounted to fifty-three, of which fourteen were killed, in this little affair, which must have afforded him considerable food for thought. The rockets had been harmless, because Heke had covered all the roofs of his huts with green flax. The stockades could evidently be breached only by artillery, and that heavy artillery. The enemy, moreover, thoroughly understood the art of fortification, for the site of the *pa* was, as always, admirably chosen, and full advantage was taken of excavated shelter and underground passages. Lastly, the Maoris had good American rifles, and understood the secret of co-ordinated counter-attack.[1] May 8.

After the action, the men had to carry their wounded

[1] Hulme to Fitzroy, 1, 7, 9 May, enclosed in Fitzroy to Sec. of State, 19 May 1845.

1845. for eighteen miles over saturated country, and were
May 10. so much fatigued that Hulme, on the 10th, granted them a halt. But hearing that Heke had evacuated the *pa*, he returned to the Keri Keri and re-embarked. He had only been able to reach his objective by keeping his troops upon half-rations for seven days, during which they had lived on meat and potatoes, their biscuit having once again been ruined by rain. Without proper transport, as he justly observed, it was impossible to conduct active operations. It was said that Heke had lost fifty killed and thrice as many wounded, and, as the Maoris faced the troops in the open, it is quite possible that their casualties were heavy; but he was by no means disheartened yet. Fitzroy was fain to call out an hundred militiamen at Auckland and to scrape together troops for a second attempt.

He had by this time been further reinforced by a detachment of the Ninety-ninth from Sydney; and a fresh expedition of just under five hundred men was now sent to deal with Heke under command of Colonel Despard of the Ninety-ninth. Before Despard could
June. land a man, Heke, on the 12th of June, fell upon Waka Nene's warriors with superior numbers, but was beaten back with loss, he himself being severely wounded. Despard, hearing of this on the next day, decided to move to the Keri Keri river at once in order to take advantage of so fortunate a circumstance; but he was delayed for several days by the grounding of one of his transports, which was so badly damaged that he was obliged to transfer the troops and stores in her to other ships. On the 16th he sailed, and landing on the Keri Keri at noon, reached the mission-station late in the evening. There he endeavoured to collect transport, but could find only five old bullock-drays and two four-horse carts with which he made shift to pursue his way some six miles westward to Waimate. The road was very bad; rain fell heavily; and two of his wretched vehicles broke down on the

way. With great difficulty he reached Waimate, 1845. June.
bringing with him two days' supplies, and then
perforce halted while his transport returned to fetch
more. Meanwhile he laboured strenuously to bring
forward four guns which he had borrowed from the
Hazard; and, as these were mounted only on their
naval trucks, with wheels fifteen inches in diameter,
progress over a rough country covered with dense
brushwood was terribly slow. At last on the 23rd June 23.
he was able to move from Waimate, when his troubles
on the march were multiplied, for the road was in-
famous, and there were four swollen rivers to be crossed.
However, after ten hours of strenuous work the column
traversed the six miles which had separated them from
Heke's own *pa* at Ohaeawai; and his faithful ally,
Waka Nene, encamped his warriors within three
hundred and fifty yards of it.

Despard reconnoitred the stronghold carefully. It
was of quadrate form, some two hundred yards long
by half that measure broad, with projecting outworks
at the four angles. The outer stockade was of tree-
trunks some eight inches in diameter, set close together,
sunk deep in the ground, and rising ten feet above the
surface, the interstices being well stuffed with flax.
Within this was a ditch five feet wide and as many
deep, and beyond it a second stockade of like strength
with the first, while the area within was subdivided by
two more cross barricades, of similar height and
strength, extending from side to side. Despard threw
up a battery for his four guns during the night of the
23rd, and on the following morning opened fire, but
with disappointing results, the shot frequently passing
between the timbers of the stockades without dis-
placing them. In the night of the 24th he shifted the June 24.
battery for a short distance to a more favourable position,
but once again the shot was ineffective, and the Maoris
could easily evade shell by taking refuge in their
excavated shelters. In despair Despard decided to
try an escalade by night, and fixed the hour for 2 A.M.

1845. on the 26th; but on the evening of the 25th rain began
June 26. to fall—"the heaviest that I ever saw even in the tropics"—wrote Despard—and continued for twelve hours. As the Ninety-sixth and Ninety-ninth, about half of the force, were armed with flint-lock muskets, which would have been quite useless in such a downpour, Despard was fain to abandon his plan of an escalade.

On the night of the 26th he brought his batteries forward to within sixty yards of the stockade, and on
June 27. the morning of the 27th again opened fire; but owing to defective construction the shelter for the gunners was soon shaken down, and the Maoris, taking cover in their rifle-pits and firing from loop-holes just above the ground, soon drove them from their guns. After some hours, Despard withdrew the troops, which had been actually formed for the assault, leaving only a guard for the artillery. The Maoris at once sallied out to seize the guns, but were driven back with loss; and this was the only satisfactory incident of the day, which cost Despard sixteen killed and wounded.

Baffled once more and alive to the uselessness of light artillery, Despard borrowed a thirty-two-pounder gun from the *Hazard*, which with enormous exertion was dragged over fifteen miles of miserable road and
June 30. placed in position on the 30th. At 10 A.M. it opened fire, the entire force watching the proceedings with breathless interest. Heke seized the moment for a sally against Waka Nene's people and drove them from their ground, which, however, was recovered with ease by a party of the Fifty-eighth. Whether because Waka Nene's warriors were shaken by this attack, or for whatever reason, Despard thought himself compelled by it to come to an immediate decision; and he resolved to assault as soon as the twenty-six rounds of his heavy gun had been expended. The storming party was led by sixty volunteers from his three regiments, and supported by eighty grenadiers of the Fifty-eighth and Ninety-sixth with a body of

seamen-pioneers carrying axes, ropes and ladders, while two more parties each one hundred strong followed in rear. The whole were concealed in a hollow within a hundred yards of the stockade, and rushed forward at the signal of the bugle-call "Advance." The men behaved with the greatest gallantry and succeeded in forcing the outer stockade, but could make no impression upon the inner, and, being shot down from a double line of loopholes, were driven back with the loss of one hundred and nine killed and wounded. Despard attributed his failure to the fact that the axes, ropes and ladders were not brought forward by the seamen and pioneers. Waka Nene had predicted it from the first. 1845. June 30.

Having expended all the ammunition of his artillery, Despard was fain to sit still in his position three hundred and fifty yards from the *pa*, but sheltered from its fire. The rain poured down night and day, keeping the troops in continual discomfort; and at last, on the 9th of July, there arrived more thirty-two-pounder shot. Fire was re-opened on the 10th, but in the night the Maoris evacuated Ohaeawai, and were ten miles away before Despard knew that they were gone. The loss of such a stronghold meant nothing to them, for they could always move away and build another. There were, indeed, at Ohaeawai such vast stores of potatoes as struck Despard with amazement; and three old ship's guns were also abandoned by the Maoris; but in a general way Heke and his ally Kawiti were none the worse for Despard's arduous operations, whereas the English had squandered appreciable strength to no purpose. And this, according to the Maoris' theory of war, left the advantage of the campaign decidedly with them.[1] July.

It is significant of the lack of New Zealand's

[1] Despard to Fitzroy, 13, 14, 22, 26, 28 June; 2, 6, 11 July, enclosed in Fitzroy to Sec. of State, 9, 14 July 1845. Rusden, *History of New Zealand*, i. 386-387, gives Despard's numbers as 600. Despard's own returns make them 490.

1845. resources in those days that Fitzroy, after Despard's failure, begged Gipps to send him draught-cattle and drays from Australia. Meanwhile all operations were suspended. Despard razed the *pa* at Ohaeawai, and was so much impressed by the scientific character of its construction as to pronounce that some European must certainly have had a share in it. He found also many six-pounder shot embedded in the stockades, having failed to penetrate them, so that it was pretty evident that none but heavy pieces were of the slightest value against them. Leaving Major Bridge with four hundred men, chiefly of the Fifty-eighth and Ninety-ninth, at Waimate, he returned with the rest to Auckland. In August he returned to the Bay of Islands, but Fitzroy suspended all further operations, as both Heke and Kawiti showed signs of a desire for peace. On the 4th
Oct. of October further reinforcements of two hundred of the Fifty-eighth arrived from Sydney at the Bay of Islands, but to the end of the month nothing more was heard from Heke or Kawiti. Meanwhile Fitzroy had been recalled from the Colony, and in November arrived his successor, who was destined to print his name deeply, for good and ill, on the history of New Zealand.[1]

Captain George Grey had lost his father in infancy at the storm of Badajoz, and had himself joined the Eighty-third Foot in 1830, but had early found his way to Australia, where he had been a pioneer in exploration. He had published two volumes of his travels, evincing unmistakable literary gifts; he was a man of wide culture, with a particular interest in anthropology; he was an admirable speaker; he possessed undeniable talent for administration and indeed for statesmanship; but at heart he was a soldier, and he rejoiced in the prospect of work in the field. Within a month of his arrival he summarised the situation as follows. Kawiti, with two hundred warriors, was

[1] Fitzroy to Gipps, 9 July; to Sec. of State, 30 July, 16 Aug., 25 Oct. 1845, enclosing Despard's letters.

ensconced in a *pa* at Ruapekapeka (the Bat's Nest), 1845.
twenty-two miles due south of Russell, but within Nov.
twelve miles of the head of the Kawakawa river, which was practicable for boats. Heke, with a force of the same strength, was in a *pa* which lay twenty miles south of Kawiti's, but which, unlike it, was absolutely inaccessible to artillery. Both wished to delay active operations until they should have harvested their crops for the winter; and it was therefore essential to deal with them at once. Grey, therefore, abruptly broke off the negotiations by which both chiefs were endeavouring to gain time, arranged for friendly tribes to sever communication between Heke and Kawiti, and sent Despard up to the head of the navigable water of the Kawakawa with orders to undertake nothing unless he could be sure of a successful and continued movement. On the 10th of December the Dec.
Queen's ship *Castor* arrived, increasing to five the number of men-of-war gathered together from various stations; and Grey sailed round in her to the Kawakawa on the 14th, taking with him a naval brigade of eleven hundred men. Despard, with a force of one thousand men, drawn from seven different units,[1] reconnoitred the road to Ruapekapeka and found no extraordinary difficulties. Transport was collected; and on the 28th of December Grey, leaving such stores and guns as he was unable to carry under a guard at the head of the Kawakawa, sat down within twelve hundred yards of Kawiti's *pa*.[2]

The effect of the demonstration was immediate. Heke's warriors fell away. He could not persuade a single chief to join him; and on the 31st he disappeared into the forest with a following of no more than sixty. Despard meanwhile had been toiling to bring up his guns, the last two miles to Ruapekapeka lying through

[1] R.E., 1; R.A., 1; Marines, 56; 51st, 2; 58th, 510; 99th, 173; E.I. Co.'s artillery, 26. Total, 33 officers, 1036 men.

[2] Grey to Sec. of State, 10, 15, 17, 19, 29 Dec. 1845, with enclosures from Despard.

1846. Jan. forest so intricate that it was necessary to cut a road for the troops and the cannon, each piece even so requiring sixty men to move it. By the 1st of January 1846, he was able to throw occasional shells and rockets into the *pa*, and on the same day he began the erection of a stockade to cover the construction of a battery. Thereupon the next day the Maoris made a sally, which was repulsed by Waka Nene's people; and by the 9th two batteries were completed, one mounting two thirty-two-pounders and four five-and-a-half-inch mortars, the other an eighteen-pounder and a twelve-pounder howitzer, of which the latter was designed chiefly to check any further sortie of the enemy. Three more guns covered the main front of the camp, which was about half-a-mile from the *pa*; and altogether both preparations and precautions sound extravagantly great for the reduction of a stronghold defended by a couple of hundred savages. But the event proved that they were not excessive.

On the 10th the two batteries opened fire, the one at a range of three hundred and fifty, the other at that of one hundred and sixty yards, and by evening the outer stockade was thoroughly breached. Despard contemplated an immediate assault, but abandoned the project in deference to the remonstrances of a friendly chief, for Heke and his followers had just joined Kawiti's men in the *pa*. On the morning of the 11th Waka Nene's brother, seeing no movement in the *pa*, stole through the breach with a few followers, and was at once joined by a hundred troops. The Maoris, who were taking shelter from the fire in their excavations, sprang to arms and poured in a heavy fire; but they were driven out by the rush of the storming party, and, after a final stand behind a breastwork of felled trees behind the *pa*, they disappeared into the forest, carrying away their wounded. The casualties of Despard's force did not exceed forty-one; but when he went over the *pa* he was thankful that he had been dissuaded from the assault. The place was one network of stockades, every hut being a fortress in itself, palisaded with trunks

a foot and more in diameter, which were planted close together and deeply sunk in the ground, with an embankment of earth behind the palisade and excavated shelters beneath. Any number of men might have been sacrificed before it was mastered by storm; and, even as things were, the garrison, excepting those that were killed outright, made their escape. Indeed it was said that the Maoris were only taken off their guard because the 11th was the Sabbath, which day, as they understood, was devoted by the English to prayer.[1] 1846. Jan.

The effect of the action was none the less immediate. Heke and Kawiti sued for peace upon any terms, and Grey, accepting their submission, granted them and their followers a free pardon. Thus tranquillity was secured in the north; and Grey next turned his attention to the Maori unrest about Wellington, taking some five hundred troops with him. At the outset it seemed that he had settled the trouble without bloodshed, for both Rauparaha and Rangihaeata undertook to withdraw their warriors from the Hutt valley; and Grey, visiting the valley in March, found the *pa*, which had been constructed there, abandoned. He described it as the very strongest position that he had ever seen in any part of the world, and was evidently thankful that he had not the task of attacking it. Distributing his troops for the protection of the district, Grey hoped that all hostility would die out, but in April a party of marauders stole through the cordon and murdered a couple of settlers. Rauparaha at once sent a message to say that if a party were sent to Porirua, some sixteen miles north of Wellington on the western coast, the murderers should be given up. The party duly presented itself, but the natives declined to surrender the murderers; and Grey, embarking two hundred men on the *Castor* at Wellington, promptly sailed round to Porirua to arrest them himself. He was met by Rauparaha, who told him that Rangihaeata and the April.

[1] Grey to Sec. of State, 13 Jan. 1846, enclosing Despard's report. Rusden, i. 394-396.

1846. April. murderers had fled northward into the forest; and for the moment Grey contented himself with occupying Porirua with two hundred men, the place being the point to which all the roads to Wellington from the neighbouring districts converged. But discovering later that Rangihaeata and the murderers had actually been at Porirua when he came to the place, and that Rauparaha had lied to him, he began to think out plans for the future.

The situation was not quite an easy one. It was essential in the first place that Wellington should be held, because it was the only harbour in the south of the North Island—in fact the only harbour, excepting Auckland, worth consideration in the North Island—and the only outlet for the produce of many thriving settlements extending northward of Wellington to Taranaki. North of Porirua the Maori tribes were friendly, but in Porirua itself were the hostile tribes of Rauparaha and Rangihaeata, which had been constantly molesting the settlers about Wellington and, having control of the ferry across the harbour, prevented those to northward from bringing their goods to market. It was not very difficult to keep those chiefs in order by the occupation of Porirua; but the harbour of Porirua was only deep enough for boats and Maori canoes; and the outer anchorage was so much exposed that there could be no certainty of landing reinforcements, supplies and stores by sea, the more so as the coast is perhaps the most heavily wind-swept in the world.[1] From Wellington to Porirua by land the distance was trifling—a mere sixteen miles—and for the first six miles on the side of Wellington the road was good; but the remaining ten or eleven miles, running over rugged hills from fifteen hundred to eighteen hundred feet high and covered with thick woods, could hardly be traversed. The road from Porirua to the Hutt valley, moreover, passing through

[1] I have been told that the Falkland Islands are perhaps worse; but Wellington is proverbial for its eternal gales.

dense forest throughout, was almost impassable by any but a native. The first requisite, therefore, was the making of a military road to ensure communication between Wellington and Porirua; and meanwhile security could only be assured, more or less, by keeping eighty men at Wellington itself, two hundred in the Hutt valley, and rather more than two hundred at Porirua. The isolation of these weak detachments from one another could not fail to be a source of constant anxiety, more particularly as there was no reserve from which they could be reinforced. And in any case the distances were great. From Auckland to Wellington by sea, taking the shortest route from the harbour of Manukau on the west coast, is three hundred miles, and from the Bay of Islands to Wellington at least six hundred; and of course there could be no certainty of fair winds.[1] 1846. May.

All was quiet until the 16th of May when a party of Maoris surprised an outlying post in the Hutt valley. They overpowered the inlying picquet, killing or wounding ten men, but were driven back from the stockaded farm-house where the main body of the troops—fifty men of the Fifty-eighth—were quartered. On the 2nd of June they followed up this outrage by burning an abandoned house near the post, from time to time also creeping up and firing at the sentries; and later on in the month they trapped in an ambush a reconnoitring party, which lost five men wounded before it could be extricated. Grey, who had returned to Auckland, at once hurried back to Wellington, and by the beginning of July he had obtained, through the enterprise of Lieutenant Yelverton of the artillery and Midshipman McKillop of the *Calliope*, a full description of Rangihaeata's *pa* at Porirua. It was immensely strong; and, since it was certain that the chief would evacuate it as soon as it had been seriously damaged by artillery, Grey June. July.

[1] Grey to Sec. of State, 9 April 1846, enclosing instructions to O.C. Porirua.

1846. decided to leave Rangihaeata alone for the present
July. and give his attention to Rauparaha. On the morning of the 21st of July a detachment of troops seized Rauparaha by surprise, and took him on board the *Calliope*; and thereupon Rangihaeata evacuated his *pa* and retired into the forest. Meanwhile, in response to an appeal from Grey to Gipps, a detachment of the Sixty-fifth had arrived from Sydney at the beginning
Aug. of August; and with these and small parties of the Fifty-eighth and Ninety-ninth, some two hundred and fifty in all, added to as many friendly Maoris, Major Last of the Ninety-ninth advanced to the pursuit of Rangihaeata in the Horokiwi valley. On the 6th he came into sight of a new *pa* built of horizontal logs on the summit of an almost inaccessible hill but, before he could approach it, was himself attacked by Rangihaeata, who, making a feint upon his front, tried to turn Last's left flank. The Maoris were driven back with loss; and Last, deciding that an assault upon the *pa* would not be worth its cost, brought up three small mortars and threw shells into it, while his Maori allies built a palisade round it, according to their own system of warfare, to cut off the water and supplies of the garrison. Within a week Rangihaeata took to the forest again, and within a month his followers were broken up into little groups of half-starved spiritless men, powerless for the present for further mischief.[1]

1847. For nine months all was quiet; and meanwhile the British government decided that it would for the present maintain two thousand regular troops in New Zealand. The completion of the military road to Porirua had assured the safety of Wellington; but in May 1847 the rebel Maoris again became troublesome, murdering settlers at Wanganui, on the coast about one hundred miles to north. The natives at this place, perhaps five thousand in number, had always

[1] Grey to Sec. of State, 17, 20 June, 2, 9, 20, 21, 23 July, 31 Aug. (enclosing Last's reports), 18 Sept. 1846.

overawed the Europeans; and possibly the recent establishment of a small garrison may have irritated them. But, be this as it may, they followed up their first outrage by murdering a straggling soldier of the Fifty-eighth on the 19th of May, and then boldly attacking the garrison. They were repulsed with some slight loss, and then established themselves in a difficult country full of ravines and morasses. Grey promptly moved to the spot with reinforcements from Wellington, but found on advancing that the enemy retired before him. Satisfied that the design of the Maoris was to lure him into an ambush, he retorted their own trick upon them, and threw out a small party of the Sixty-fifth in seeming carelessness, with a strong reserve hidden hard by. The Maoris fell into the trap, and, having lost twenty men of their own and touched not one of the English, retired into the forest considerably discouraged. Not until July did they return, when they again came down to Wanganui and manœuvred to tempt the garrison out of their block-houses. The English commander, on his side, manœuvred to lure them into an attack; and there was a brisk little fight over very difficult ground, which culminated, after four hours, in the English closing with the Maoris and charging them with the bayonet. The English casualties did not exceed fourteen out of four hundred men engaged, and the Maoris, whose numbers were about the same, probably suffered more heavily, for they gave no more trouble. With this little affair the first New Zealand war may be said to have come to an end.[1]

1847. May. July.

The reader may ask whether such trifling operations are worth the space which I have devoted to them. The answer is that they form an essential part of the history of the British Army and, apart from the fact that a second and more serious New Zealand war remains to be recounted, throw much light upon that history. In the first place there was the Imperial

[1] Grey to Sec. of State, 11 May, 1 July, 21 Aug. 1847.

1847. government, striving desperately, for the sake of economy, to restrict the boundaries of the Empire and to keep down the numbers of the army; and there was the roving Englishman insisting upon the enlargement of those boundaries and upon his protection while effecting his purpose. The roving Englishman inevitably had his way; and between the two contending parties the unfortunate army, both officers and men, was subjected to an almost unendurable strain. The navy also was severely taxed; and one has only to look at the composition of Despard's force, with its gunners from India, its infantry from England, and its naval brigades drawn from three different naval stations, to realise how steadily the English Parliament, as reconstituted under the Reform Bill of 1832, evaded its duties and refused to face plain facts. Debates on New Zealand affairs occupied an extraordinary number of hours at Westminster, and the unfortunate Ministers, whose duty it was to disentangle the truth from the masses of conflicting information laid before them by intriguers and philanthropists, financiers and fanatics, godly missionaries and stark rogues, may well have wished New Zealand at the bottom of the sea. But the hard work fell, as usual, upon the British sailor and the British soldier, and, however thankless it may have been, it was well bestowed to add such a country as New Zealand to the British Empire.

From a military point of view also, the war against the Maoris is of no common interest. In the first place, we have a second and most instructive example of the results of undertaking even the most trifling operations without any transport whatever. Who can tell what the sufferings of the sick and wounded must have been in Hulme's little column in the New Zealand winter of 1845? There were—there could have been—no medical stores, no ambulances, no stretchers, nothing more than white men, already burdened with arms, ammunition and food, could carry upon them. Next,

there is the enemy to be considered, and the first point is that, as Grey declared emphatically more than once, these savages were better armed than the British soldier. It is a strong comment upon the danger of leaving any garrison, even the most remote and the least likely to be engaged in war, with obsolete weapons. Lastly, we come to the peculiar tactics of the Maoris which, added to their great military worth as fighting men and to the physical conformation of the country, presented a very difficult problem. Skill in choice of positions and in fortification is nothing very rare among uncivilised or half-civilised races; but, as a rule, the garrisons of such strongholds, after two or three experiences of capture and defeat, lose courage and surrender. It was not so with the Maoris. They built a *pa* as a safe base for offensive movements, and valued it for no other purpose. If an enemy chose to sacrifice a number of men in assaulting it, nothing pleased them better. If he pressed them hard, they quietly evacuated it and went away to build another, for there was no lack of timber in the vast forests nor of flax in the swamps; and it was necessary for their opponent to begin all over again. It may be said that thorough investment of the *pa*, and a regularly conducted siege, would have ensured the capture of all within it; but such investment was no easy matter. In the first place, it demanded a great number of men, and, if the men were forthcoming, it was difficult to bring up food for them. There must be slow and laborious cutting of roads through the forest; and by the time that the force was assembled and about to get to work, the *pa* would probably be evacuated. The Maoris, it is true, would not condescend to attack convoys of provisions. An enemy must have food before he can fight; and, as they wished to fight him, they were well content to let him bring up his victuals. But they had no lack of tactical skill, nor of enterprise, and never lost an opportunity of attacking an imprudently isolated detachment. Another trouble was that light artillery was useless against a well-constructed 1847.

1847. *pa*. Grey declared that nothing less than an eighteen-pounder was of any service, and he asked, by preference, for twenty-four pounder howitzers. But the labour of dragging these heavy pieces, with their ammunition, through the forest was immense, and the need for them put additional strain on the resources of the transport. Altogether a Maori campaign could not fail to be costly, troublesome and inglorious. If the Maoris could be tempted to fight in the open, then some real advantage might be gained; but they were too wary to be often caught in this way. Practically, the only effective method of subduing them was to follow them from *pa* to *pa* until they were forced to take refuge in the forest far from their provision-grounds. Then, though they did not starve, for they could live for a time upon fern-root, they became physically weak and dispirited. But this was a slow process, and not made the easier by the white settlers, who, unless by chance they were making money out of the campaign, were always ready with sneers at the plodding methods of the military. Even in 1846 Grey found reason to complain of these persons. All operations, as he said, were conducted in the presence of an European population, divided into violent factions, who distracted the camp, encouraged the natives by spreading unfavourable reports, and gave the rebel Maoris accurate information of all movements of troops by publishing them in the newspapers.[1] How strenuous soever the exertions of the soldiers, their service was undervalued, and they were discouraged by living in an atmosphere of perpetual detraction. The Maori wars, if recalled at all by Englishmen, are associated entirely with unsuccessful assaults upon native fortresses; and, without any examination of the facts, scornful judgement is passed upon officers who did not know their business and men who ran away. It would be surprising if, looking to all the circumstances, there had not been such assaults; but it is abundantly clear

[1] Grey to Sec. of State, 17 June 1846.

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that the British commanders, in the operations above recounted, were under no illusions as to the strength of the Maori fortresses, and that, looking to the meagreness of their reserves, they made every effort to master them without loss. But it is not easy to conduct even a small campaign when it is impossible to obtain half-a-dozen waggons and teams without sending to fetch them over a thousand miles of stormy ocean. The truth is that the Maoris were a very dangerous enemy; and that if the Burmese—the rival builders of stockades—had been such fighters as the Maoris, we should never have conquered Burma. Very soon we shall have to deal with another Burmese campaign; but first it is necessary to return to the Punjab. 1846.

AUTHORITIES :

The authorities for the first New Zealand war are to be found in the Public Record Office, C.O. 209, Vols. 28 to 46. Many of these papers have been published in Blue Books, but it is safer, when possible, to consult the originals. The only other record that I know of is *Reminiscences of Twelve Months' Service in New Zealand*, by Lieutenant McKillop (1849). McKillop was the midshipman who, at great risk, spied out Rangihaeata's *pa*, and who later became an admiral in the Turkish service. His book is of little value.

CHAPTER XXXVI

1846. The treaty of Lahore had hardly been signed before difficulties began over its fulfilment. During the minority of the young Maharaja, Dhulip Singh, the administration of the Punjab was necessarily entrusted to a Council of Regency, with Lal Singh at its head. It was represented that without the support of a British force this government would not last a week. Very reluctantly, and after repeated refusals, Hardinge consented to leave a wing of irregular cavalry, one horse-battery, two field-batteries, one European and eight native battalions at Lahore, under the command of Sir John Littler. This arrangement was supposed to last only till the end of 1846, but even so, Gough naturally condemned it as a dispersion of force. Military considerations, however, had to yield to political exigency; and, to make the best of a bad matter, Henry Lawrence was installed as resident, with his brother John in charge of the Jullundur Doab, and with his other brother George, Major Abbott, John Nicholson, Herbert Edwardes and Harry Lumsden, for colleagues or subordinates.

Then came difficulties over Kashmir. Hardinge had foreseen that the pecuniary indemnity would not be forthcoming; but, when Kashmir was surrendered in lieu of it, it was obvious that military occupation of a very difficult mountainous country three hundred miles from the Sutlej was out of the question. The Indian government could afford neither the men nor the money to hold Kashmir in force, and to lock up a brigade or any weak detachment in it would have been

sheer madness. Hardinge, therefore, made over Kashmir to Gholab Singh for a payment of three-quarters of a million sterling. But the Sikh Governor of the province refused to give it up until a mixed force of Sikhs and British under Henry Lawrence advanced against him, when he surrendered without firing a shot. It was then found that Lal Singh and the Rani had abetted the recalcitrance of the Governor, and Lal Singh was, after due trial, deposed from his high office at the head of the Regency. Such incidents as these showed clearly that the withdrawal of the British garrison from Lahore would infallibly result in anarchy; and Hardinge offered the Sikh chiefs the alternative either of complete evacuation of Lahore by the Indian government, or of a British Protectorate during the remaining years of the Maharaja's minority. They declared unanimously for the Protectorate, and accordingly a new treaty was signed in December 1846. Thereby the Rani was shorn of all power, in return for a pension; and a new Council of Regency was appointed to carry out the behests of the British resident. For twelve months the system worked well. Henry Lawrence was obliged to go home on sick leave at the end of 1847, when he was succeeded by Sir Frederick Currie. So successful had been Lawrence's administration that Hardinge confidently believed the problem of the Punjab to have been solved. 1846.

None the less he took military precautions, and for the greater safety of the north-west frontier he increased the total force at Meerut and to north-west of it to fifty thousand men with sixty guns. But, on the other hand, owing to financial pressure he, at the beginning of 1847, decided to reduce the native army by fifty thousand men, cutting down the establishment of battalions from one thousand to eight hundred, and of cavalry regiments from five hundred to four hundred and twenty. In the artillery he diminished the establishment of horses only, and he actually increased the amount of ammunition carried by each battery 1847.

1847. in its limbers and waggons. He was careful, too, not to disband any existing regiments, actually adding eight new regiments of cavalry; but in the matter of reducing the strength of battalions he was, despite of Gough's protests, inexorable. Subsequent events were soon to prove that his policy was mistaken, but he was delivered from the burden of the consequences. In 1847 he resigned the position of Governor-general;
1848. and on the 12th of January 1848, there arrived as his successor at Calcutta a young man of thirty-five, James, Earl of Dalhousie.

Three months later came an unpleasant incident in the Punjab. In pursuance of the general work of improving the administration of the country two British officials, Mr. Vans Agnew of the Civil Service, and Lieutenant Anderson of the Bombay army, were sent to Multan as resident magistrates. The Sikh Governor, Mulraj, upon hearing of their appointment, resigned his own; and they were accordingly accompanied by his chosen successor, Khan Singh.
April. They arrived at Multan on the 18th of April and were most courteously received by Mulraj, but, when they took over the fort on the next day, they were both cut down by men of the garrison and severely, though not mortally, wounded. Vans Agnew contrived to send a report of this to Herbert Edwardes, at Dera Fateh Khan, some eighty miles to the north-west, on the same evening; but on the 20th the Sikh troops in the fort came out, murdered both officers, and exposed their mutilated bodies on the walls of Multan.

At the outset the incident seemed to be of no great importance. It was purely a political outrage, which might possibly have been provoked by tactless behaviour on the part of the officers; and accordingly the political agents rose like one man to call for an immediate advance of troops upon Multan. Herbert Edwardes, taking matters into his own hands, collected all the forces of the Sikh Regency that could be spared, appealed for help to the loyal chief of Bahawal-

pur, and actually moved upon the fortress. Before starting, he sent a message to Currie, the resident at Lahore, urging the peril which menaced Vans Agnew and Anderson; whereupon Currie ordered General Whish to march with such troops as could be spared from Lahore to Multan. He reported this proceeding to Gough, who approved his action; but Currie, presently learning that the officers had been killed, countermanded the movement of Whish and applied to Gough for instructions. 1848. April.

Meanwhile Edwardes, on the night of the 24th of April, crossed the Indus with a thousand Sikhs and six hundred Pathans, but, hearing in his turn that it was too late to save Vans Agnew and Anderson, as also that Mulraj intended to march against him, he returned to Dera Fateh Khan. His Sikhs were already mutinous, but he overawed them with his Pathans; and on the 4th of May he was joined by General van Cortlandt, with a battalion of Mohammedan infantry and a battery of horse-artillery, which he had summoned from Dera Ismail Khan. Thereupon Mulraj, who had followed Edwardes as far as Leiah, twenty miles from Dera Fateh Khan, retreated; and at this point Currie stepped in again. Aware that few Sikh troops could be trusted to act against Mulraj, he decided to employ only those in which he thought he could confide. He arranged, therefore, that five columns should operate for the pacification of the Multan district, three of them composed of Sikh soldiers under Sikh commanders, of whom Shere Singh was the most prominent, one of the troops collected by Edwardes, and the fifth of the levies of the Raja of Bahawalpur. Multan fortress itself he reserved to be dealt with by British troops. Needless to say, the Sikh troops did not appear; and Mulraj, leaving a small garrison in Multan, crossed the Chenab with six thousand men and thirteen guns. Edwardes, who was now again isolated from Van Cortlandt, marched in haste to join him, and, being reinforced from Bahawalpur, defeated Mulraj twice on May.

1848. July. the 18th of June and the 1st of July, and drove him under the walls of Multan. It was, however, ominous that of the three Sikh columns, which should have helped him, two had joined him with none but Mohammedan troops, the Sikhs having deserted, while Shere Singh waited within five miles of Multan, as if undecided which side to take.

Edwardes, young and flushed with success, meanwhile conceived the plan of besieging and taking Multan itself, and so putting an end to the rebellion. He only wanted a few heavy guns and mortars—so he airily declared—with Major Napier, the future Lord Napier of Magdala, as engineer to plan the operations. Strangely enough Napier pronounced himself in favour of this hare-brained scheme, naming a brigade of infantry with a few heavy guns, mortars and howitzers, as sufficient for the purpose. The political agents, including John and Henry Lawrence, all cried out that Multan was a place of no strength and could be easily mastered. But it lay with Gough to decide whether gunners should be allotted to Edwardes's siege-train; and Gough very firmly set his foot upon the whole design. Napier, on maturer consideration, revoked his previous opinion; and thus an enterprise which must have ended disastrously and brought about innumerable awkward complications, was happily arrested.

Since Edwardes's scheme of campaign had been quashed, Currie set on foot a new one of his own. On the 10th of July he ordered a British force, drawn from Lahore and Ferozepore, to move upon Multan with a siege-train duly equipped, under General Whish. He reported his proceedings to Gough, who pronounced the force too small, and increased it to two brigades of infantry, a native cavalry brigade, two troops of horse-artillery and a siege-train.[1] Accordingly

[1] WHISH'S FORCE:

Cavalry Brigade: Lt.-Col. Salter—7th, 11th Irreg. Cav., 11th Light Cav.

Artillery and Engineers: 2 troops horse-artillery, 4 cos. foot-artillery, 3 cos. sappers, 2 cos. pioneers.

the troops left Ferozepore and Lahore on the 24th of July; and the British regiments were sent down the Ravi and Sutlej by water while the native regiments marched along the banks, moving by night to avoid the heat. On the 18th and 19th of August the troops [1] encamped within three miles of Multan; on the 4th of September the siege-train arrived; and on the same day Whish summoned the fortress to surrender, and was answered by defiance. 1848. July. Sept.

Major Napier, the Chief Engineer, suggested two plans, the first to storm the town out of hand by a surprise attack from the south; and the second to move round to the citadel on the north and attack it by regular approaches. The first was prompted by the political desire for a speedy success, but was rejected as unduly costly and as indicating mistrust of success, for Edwardes had already thrown up batteries against the south front, where the enemy was entrenched outside the walls. Ground was broken on that side accordingly on the 6th; and by the 9th three batteries had been completed, one of two eight-inch howitzers, another of three eight-inch mortars, and a third of four eighteen-pounders. On the 10th an attack was made on an outlying position by detachments of the Tenth Foot, and of the Forty-ninth and Seventy-second Native Infantry, which was repulsed with the loss of nearly one hundred men. Napier then threw up another battery of four five-and-a-half-inch mortars; and on the 12th of September Whish stormed the Sikh entrenchments, and drove the enemy back almost under the walls. Five hundred of the enemy were left dead on the ground; but Whish's casualties exceeded two hundred and fifty, seventy-four of them falling upon the Tenth and forty-nine upon the

Infantry: 1*st Brigade*—Lt.-Col. Hervey—H.M. 10th Foot; 8th, 52nd Bengal N.I.
2*nd Brigade*—Lt.-Col. Markham—H.M. 32nd; 49th, 51st, 72nd Bengal N.I.

[1] The 32nd did not come in until the 25th.

1848. Sept. Thirty-second, each of which regiments had furnished six companies for the assault. Half-a-mile of ground had been gained, but the actual leaguer of Multan had not even been begun; and even on the 9th Napier had expressed his opinion to Whish that his force was too weak to prosecute the siege.

Whish at first positively refused to listen to such gloomy counsel; but on the 14th he was staggered by the news that Shere Singh, who hitherto had seemed friendly and had been actively aiding Edwardes with his troops, had joined Mulraj in rebellion. This signified that the contest was not to be against a single recalcitrant chief, but with the whole strength of the Sikh nation. Apart from that, the actual composition of the garrison of Multan had altogether changed in a few weeks. Mulraj's irregular levies had been replaced by old Sikh soldiers, and it was reckoned that there were ten thousand of them in the city of Multan alone. In the circumstances it was hopeless to think of continuing the siege. Not only were the prospects of an assault hopeless, but the communications of the besieging force were gravely threatened. Napier reckoned that reinforcements of two more brigades would be needed to ensure success; and Whish, on the evening of the 15th, withdrew his troops to Sadusain, to secure his communications by ferry with Sind, Bombay and the country beyond the Indus on the one hand, and with Bahawalpur, Ferozepore and Lahore on the other.

So ended the campaign of the political agents, in waste of time, energy, money and lives, as is usual with the work of the amateur soldier. Let us now look to the views and actions of men who were genuinely of the military profession. When, upon certain intelligence that Vans Agnew and Anderson had been murdered, Currie sought instructions from Gough, the General decided without hesitation that an immediate advance of the army would be, from a military point of view, most unwise. No one knew what the outrage

at Multan might portend. It might be a mere isolated incident, in which case it could be dealt with at leisure by the Sikh government, for it was certain that nothing could bring the dead men to life again. But, on the other hand, it might be part of a preconcerted scheme of rebellion on the part of that same Sikh government, or a symptom of its inability to hold its soldiers in check; and in that case the situation became in the highest degree serious. An immediate advance might precipitate a second Sikh war; and this was an event upon which Gough reckoned as inevitable sooner or later, for he had never regarded the first war as decisive, and he had no trust in the good faith of the Sikh government. An advance, then, if made at all must be made in force; and Gough did not consider it safe to invade the Punjab with a smaller army than twenty-four thousand men with seventy-eight guns, added to a further reinforcement from Sind. Now the utmost strength that could be collected from the foremost stations, without reducing them to dangerous weakness, was ten thousand men and forty-eight guns; and these, owing to the system of granting furloughs to the native troops in the spring, could not be collected together before June. Even then there was another difficulty. There was no transport ready for these troops, the whole of their carriage having been, through motives of economy, discharged by the Supreme government at Calcutta. An immediate advance upon Multan, therefore, would mean the launching of an inadequate and imperfectly equipped force into active operations in the hottest season of the year in one of the hottest countries in the world. The district of Multan would be inundated by the melting of the Himalayan snows; proper investment of the city would be impossible; much time would be needed to bring up an adequate siege-train; and meanwhile the troops would die by hundreds of fever, sunstroke and heat-apoplexy. 1848.

So reasoned Gough with the wisdom born of sound thinking and long experience. It is true that he

1848. doubled the strength of the force required of him by Currie for General Whish; but, being unable to overrule the authority of the political agent, he could only do what he could to avert the worst consequences of Currie's folly. The Duke of Wellington at home confirmed Gough's judgement; and Dalhousie on the spot had the courage and good sense to support his policy against all the clamour of political ignorance and impatience. But Dalhousie was not so ready to second Gough's positive proposals for immediate preparation. Foremost among the General's recommendations was one to restore the native regiments to the establishment which had ruled before Hardinge's ill-timed reductions, with the double object of gathering in twelve to fifteen thousand masterless old soldiers for the Company's army and of preventing them from taking service with the Sikhs. Dalhousie, while granting Gough full powers in minor matters, disapproved of his principal measures. He considered that twenty thousand men and a siege-train of the second class would be ample to meet all emergencies. He declined, on grounds of economy, to allow transport to be immediately collected, and above all he refused to sanction the re-enlistment of discharged sepoys.[1]

Meanwhile signs had multiplied that a general rising of the Sikhs was imminent. Far to north Major George Lawrence, brother of Henry and John, was in charge of Peshawar, with Major James Abbott under him in control of the Hazara country to east of him. In July Abbott reported grave unrest among his Sikh garrisons, and his suspicions that Chattar Singh, father of Shere Singh, was the moving spirit in stirring it. In August Chattar Singh openly justified those suspicions by exciting a mutiny among the Sikh troops at Haripur, and sent emissaries to raise the Sikhs all over the country. In alarm for the safety of Attock, Abbott sent John Nicholson with a small force to hold that fort; and for some days he and Nicholson contrived by

[1] Rait, *Life of Viscount Gough*, ii. 125-134, 141-167.

means of their native levies to cramp Chattar Singh's military activities, though they could not prevent him from sending appeals for aid to Shere Singh at Multan, to Dost Mohamed at Kabul, and to his brother, Sultan Mohamed at Kohat. The situation was evidently critical; and both Lawrence and Nicholson, true to their character as political agents, but utterly forgetful of their training as soldiers, clamoured for a brigade to be sent up to Hazara. Gough flatly declined to fritter away his force by senseless and dangerous detachment of isolated brigades; Dalhousie supported him, and even Currie signified his agreement. As a matter of fact Gough had no troops to spare, for he had not yet, in the third week of August, received permission to collect a field-force upon the frontier. 1848.

At last, in the first days of September, Dalhousie recognised, as he put it, that financial must yield to military considerations; and he authorised Gough to collect a sufficient force both to support Whish's troops about Multan and to provide against any outbreak on the frontier. But he still declined to augment the establishment of the Bengal army. Then came the news of the little check before Multan on the 9th of September, and Gough made arrangements for a force of cavalry to cross the Sutlej and for a brigade of infantry to proceed to Bahawalpur. Shortly afterwards arrived the tidings of Shere Singh's defection, and then at last, on the 30th of September, Dalhousie ordered the augmentation of the regiments of the Native army to their old establishment, and sanctioned the summoning of troops, as Gough had proposed, from Sind and Bombay. Thus after more than four months of delay the General had his will; but meanwhile an appreciable detachment had been taken from his army and planted in the neighbourhood of Multan for no useful military purpose whatever. Sept.

The month of October saw difficulties multiplied. On the 9th Shere Singh quitted Multan with his own infantry and some of Mulraj's cavalry and marched up Oct.

1848. Oct. the Chenab to join the rebels of the north; neither Whish nor Edwardes moving a man to prevent him. On the 18th George Lawrence had a more or less successful skirmish with Chattar Singh in the Hazara country and forced him to retire towards Attock; but on the 23rd the Sikh troops at Peshawar broke into open mutiny, and Lawrence, with his brother officers, had to ride for their lives to Kohat. There Sultan Mohamed Khan, who had promised them protection, kept them for a time as his own prisoners, and later handed them over to the Sikhs at Peshawar. This gave Chattar Singh a reinforcement of six good regiments of infantry, a thousand cavalry and, to Gough's great indignation, thirty guns. Lawrence, as he observed, must have known for months that this mutiny would certainly come, yet he made no attempt to render these guns unserviceable. Then the Sikh troops at Bannu mutinied, murdered their Mohammedan commander and an English officer, and on the 21st and 22nd marched to join Shere Singh, who had halted at Jhang. Shere Singh's next movement could not be divined, but there were fears, much derided by Gough, that he would march on Lahore. Meanwhile the irrepressible Currie had taken upon himself to send a brigade of infantry to the Jullundur Doab, where John Lawrence was hampered by some petty difficulties. The mania among the political agents for ordering small detachments of troops here and there to serve their own immediate purposes presents a very curious pathological study. There were many good and able men among them who have left great reputations —the three Lawrences, Edwardes, Nicholson and others—and the great majority had begun life as soldiers. They knew, or should by this time have known, that there was a general rebellion of the Sikhs; but not one of them could look at any sphere of action except his own, nor conceive of military operations as a whole. Thus one and all seem to have held themselves entitled in any difficulty, whether

or not of their own making, to the services of a brigade. Gough at length lost all patience, and on the 28th of October took the command of all troops absolutely into his own hands, even empowering his officers in advance to send back in irons to Lahore any political agent who tried to interfere with his arrangements.[1] 1848. Oct.

Shere Singh's menace to Lahore proved, as Gough had foreseen, to be a mere feint, his real movements pointing to Wazirabad, on the south side of the Chenab and one hundred and fifteen miles from Lahore. Gough looked upon this point as the key of the situation, and had wished to move an army thither in September, so as to overawe equally Kashmir, Peshawar and Multan; but he had not been allowed to collect an army, much less to occupy with it a strategical position. As things were, he could only send an advanced detachment of cavalry across the Sutlej to cover Lahore; and this force he strengthened and pushed across the Ravi, under command of General Cureton, on the 2nd of November.[2] Cureton moved forward to Kela Dedar Singh, and there remained on the watch, being presently further reinforced by a second brigade of infantry.[3]

Troops were now moving rapidly from all quarters into Ferozepore, though the preparations of the Commissariat, owing to Dalhousie's delay in granting money, were very backward; and on the 6th of November Gough arrived there in person, intent upon a speedy advance. He was met by the tidings of the fall of Peshawar and the capture of Abbott's guns; but still more important news came in that Shere Singh, in his advance northward, had halted twenty-five miles short of Wazirabad at Ramnagar. This in- Nov.

[1] Rait, ii. 175-177.

[2] H.M. 3rd Dragoons and 14th L.D., 8th Bengal N.C., 12th Irreg. Cav., 3 troops of horse-artillery; one light field-battery; Godby's Infantry Brigade (102nd Foot and 7th Bengal N.I.).

[3] Eckford's Brigade: 31st and 56th Bengal N.I.

1848. Nov. creased Gough's anxiety for an immediate forward movement, so as to make the Punjab the field of operations and engage Shere Singh there before he could join his father, Chattar Singh, in the far more difficult country about Peshawar. Multan for the time Gough left out of account as a secondary matter. At present Shere Singh had only an advanced detachment at Ramnagar, communicating with his main force on the other bank of the Chenab by a ford. Gough hoped to entice the entire host across the river, beat them, and, through a rapid movement of his cavalry by way of Wazirabad, to cut them off from the revolted garrison of Bannu and the levies of Chattar Singh. In fact he entered upon his campaign with some hope of beating his enemy in detail, the great obstacle to his plans being that the Chenab lay between him and them. Cureton's detachment was thrown out as a bait to lure Shere Singh across the river; but, fearing to leave him too weak, Gough on the 8th ordered Colin Campbell to draw a strong brigade from Lahore, cross the Ravi, join Cureton and take the whole detachment under his command.

Then the consequences of belated preparation—belated through no fault of Gough—became apparent. Campbell, applying to the Commissariat for ten days' supplies with transport to carry them, was answered that he could have neither the one nor the other. With the greatest difficulty he, in the course of forty-eight hours, collected food and carriage for two native battalions,[1] and with these—the Thirty-sixth and Forty-sixth Native Infantry—he marched from Lahore, on the 10th joining Cureton. On the 13th Gough himself came to Lahore, and on the 15th, being satisfied that Shere Singh would not be tempted to cross the river, he authorised Campbell, should a favourable opportunity present itself, to dislodge the

[1] Half a battalion of British troops needed as much transport as two native battalions.

Sikhs from Ramnagar. On the 16th he began his advance with the main body, though still in the dark upon many points. "I do not know," he wrote on the 15th, "whether we are at peace or at war, or who it is we are fighting for;" and not till a day or two later was he informed that the contest was not to uphold the authority of the Sikh government against rebels, but to overthrow that government altogether. The situation presents a curious parallel to that in which Wellington found himself before Napoleon's advance in the campaign of Waterloo.[1] 1848. Nov.

On the 17th he learned that the mutinous battalions from Bannu had joined Shere Singh on the north side of the Chenab. Chattar Singh had not yet done so, but his junction might shortly be expected, for Lieutenant Herbert, who had succeeded Nicholson in command at Attock, while maintaining an obstinate defence, reported that his garrison's temper was uncertain and that he could not hold out much longer. In fact it was pretty clear that Gough's hopes of beating the Sikhs in detail must be abandoned. Within twenty-four hours he learned that, before Campbell could deliver his attack, Shere Singh had withdrawn the bulk of his force at Ramnagar to the north bank of the Chenab, leaving only outposts on the southern bank. Gough, therefore, pressed his march northward, with his whole army, which, with the exception of his two heavy batteries, was now complete.[2] So long as

[1] Rait, ii. 175-178.

[2] CAVALRY DIVISION: Cureton.

1st Brigade: Brigr. White—H.M. 3rd D. and 14th L.D.; 5th and 8th Bengal N.C.

2nd „ Brigr. Pope—H.M. 9th Lancers; 1st and 6th Bengal N.C.

1ST INFANTRY DIVISION: Gilbert.

1st Brigade: Brigr. Mountain—H.M. 29th Foot; 30th and 56th Bengal N.I.

2nd „ Brigr. Godby—2nd Europ. L.I. (102nd); 31st and 70th Bengal N.I.

[Continued overleaf

1848. Nov. Shere Singh lay quietly on the north bank of the Chenab he was on fertile ground, could feed his troops easily, and could await the coming not only of Chattar Singh, but, if the wily old chief could be tempted to throw in his lot against the British, even of Gholab Singh from Kashmir. Obviously, therefore, the sooner Shere Singh were pushed back, the better.

Nov. 21. On the 21st Gough came up with Campbell in his camp about eight miles from Ramnagar, and decided, as a preliminary operation, to drive the Sikh outposts across the river and to capture any guns that they might have upon the southern bank. On the night of the 21st, therefore, he pushed forward Colin Campbell with one infantry brigade, Cureton's cavalry division and three batteries of horse-artillery, and at 3 A.M.

Nov. 22. on the 22nd Gough joined this force in person. As day dawned they came up to Ramnagar and, from the eminence upon which it stands, could observe that the bulk of the Sikh force was in position upon the north bank, but that parties of the enemy were retiring from Ramnagar over the two miles of flat ground that lay between it and the river. The Chenab at this point is extremely wide from bank to bank, but in the winter the stream is contracted to a narrow channel running in a sandy bed and constantly changing its course. The sand in the bed is everywhere deep, and, however tempting to the eye at a distance, not a surface whereon it is prudent to employ cavalry or

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2ND INFANTRY DIVISION: Thackwell.

1st Brigade: Brigr. Pennycuick—H.M. 24th; 25th and 45th Bengal N.I.

2nd „ Brigr. Hoggan—H.M. 61st Foot; 6th and 36th Bengal N.I.

3rd „ Brigr. Penny—15th, 20th and 69th Bengal N.I.

ARTILLERY:

6 Horse-batteries (Lt.-Col. Huthwaite)—Lane, Christie, Huish, Warner, Duncan, Fordyce.

3 Field-batteries—Dawes, Kinleside, Austin.

2 Heavy batteries—Major Horsford.

artillery. However, the two miles of flat ground were sound enough, and Gough pushed forward Lane's and Warner's troops of horse-artillery, with an escort of White's cavalry, to hurry the retreat of the retiring Sikhs and play upon them as they crossed the ford. The Sikhs on the north bank thereupon sent cavalry over to protect their comrades, and White, allowing them to enter upon the flat ground, charged them with the Third Light Dragoons and drove them back, but prudently abstained from following them into the broken ground by the river. Thereupon the Sikhs, greatly elated, came forward in greater numbers; but White declined to be tempted into the river-bed, and withdrew, facing about from time to time, and charging when he saw fit opportunity. He had no intention of being drawn under the fire of the Sikh batteries to no purpose. 1848. Nov. 22.

Unfortunately Lane, in order to cover White's retirement, took his guns too far down into the bed of the river, where one of them stuck fast and could not be brought off except by taking it for some distance along the bed of the river under the full blast of the Sikh batteries on the north bank. It was, therefore, perforce abandoned. Campbell wished to post two battalions under cover to prevent the Sikhs from carrying it off, but Gough disapproved of this. The Sikhs, in exultation, now pushed further bodies of cavalry across the river, and Gough, taking the direction of the operations into his own hands, ordered Colonel Havelock, a brother of Henry, to charge them with the Fourteenth Light Dragoons. Havelock, wild with excitement, appears to have led his regiment straight against the Sikh reserve of cavalry, which lay in the river-bed, covered by the fire of guns and of hidden infantry. Cureton, with a small escort of native cavalry, galloped forward to stop him, but was shot dead by a bullet through the head before he could reach him. Gough likewise sent an aide-de-camp to check Havelock; but that officer was hurrying too

1848. fast to be overtaken. The Fourteenth galloped
Nov. 22. straight into the trap, with the Fifth Light Cavalry in support, and were not extricated without serious loss. Of the Fourteenth, Havelock, another officer and twelve men were killed, four officers and thirty-one men wounded. The Fifth Light Cavalry lost three officers killed, besides twenty more casualties among the men and forty among the horses. The whole affair cost twelve officers and eighty-four men killed and wounded.

More than half of these casualties were quite unnecessary, and the death of Cureton was a real loss to the army. He was one of the few generals who have risen from the ranks, having served through the whole of the Peninsular War in the Fourteenth Light Dragoons; and it should seem from Colin Campbell's account of the action [1] that Gough would have done much better to leave Cureton to handle his cavalry in his own way. However, the southern bank of the Chenab had been cleared of the enemy; and Gough was able to pitch his camp at Ramnagar, and pursue his operations for forcing the passage of the river. To do so in the face of the Sikh army, occupying a strong position with abundant artillery on the higher bank, was not to be thought of. But there were other fords farther up the stream, at Garhi-Galla, which was carefully guarded by the enemy, seven miles away, at Khanki and Chak Ali Sher, close to each other five to seven miles farther on, and lastly at Wazirabad, twenty miles above Ramnagar, where there was also a ferry. Gough, therefore, resolved to hold the Sikhs opposite Ramnagar, and to turn their position by a wide flanking movement to his right. The command of the turning column was entrusted to Sir Joseph Thackwell, who had taken over the cavalry division upon the death of Cureton, and had handed his infantry division to Campbell. The force entrusted to him was White's cavalry brigade, with the Third and Twelfth

[1] Shadwell, *Life of Lord Clyde*, i. 184-187.

Irregular cavalry substituted for the Fourteenth Light Dragoons; the Twenty-fourth and Sixty-first Foot, five-and-a-half native battalions,[1] three troops of horse-artillery, two light field-batteries and two eighteen-pounder siege-pieces. The whole represented about seven thousand men with thirty-two guns. The arrival of the heavy artillery on the 30th completed Gough's arrangements, and Thackwell received his orders to march at midnight. 1848. Nov.

Gough's instructions gave Thackwell discretionary powers to cross at any ford that he might choose, and to attack, if he could do so with advantage; but, since Garhi-Galla was known to be well guarded, he was directed to move towards Wazirabad, using the ford of Khanki, or that of Chak Ali Sher, if practicable. It was specially enjoined upon him that, unless he could be sure of bringing his troops full and fresh upon the enemy's flank opposite Ramnagar by 1 P.M. at latest on the 1st of December, he should take a second day to complete the movement.

The operation at the outset did not prosper. The cavalry was all ready to march at midnight, but, the night being very dark, two out of three of Colin Campbell's brigades lost their way to the rendezvous, and wandered about the camp for two hours before they found it. The way lay along narrow roads, where there were any, and over broken ground and heavy sand; and thus the column did not approach the two fords until 11 A.M. on the 1st of December. A staff-officer, who examined that of Chak Ali Sher, reported it difficult for guns and impracticable for pontoons, with signs of quicksands under the farther bank; and he added that the enemy was on the farther side, prepared to resist, and in a position from which the British guns could not easily drive them out. That of Khanki presented much the same difficulties; and in the face of the engineers' reports, Thackwell decided Dec. 1.

[1] 4 cos., 22nd, the 25th, 31st, 36th, 46th and 56th Bengal N.I. The original organisation of the brigades seems to have been changed.

1848. that to cross the river by either ford was impossible.[1]
Dec. 1. Colin Campbell, to whom the whole enterprise seemed unduly hazardous, was now for returning to Ramnagar; but Thackwell determined to push on to Wazirabad.

There the troops arrived between five and six o'clock in the evening, greatly fatigued after eighteen hours under arms; but Thackwell was rewarded on his arrival by favourable news. He had sent John Nicholson ahead with some irregular horse, and that indefatigable officer had already collected fifteen large boats and staked out two of the fords over the three channels in which the Chenab was then running. There was no sign of an enemy; the Twenty-fourth, two native battalions and two guns were at once ferried over to make good the passage; and other troops continued to pass in boats all through the night. A regiment of irregular horse rode through the ford; but a second brigade of infantry, while wading over, was stopped by darkness and compelled to bivouac on a sandbank in the bed of the river. The night was bitterly cold, and no supplies could be brought to the advanced troops, who were fain to wait hungry and shivering for the dawn. But the light came at last, and by noon the whole of the force was safely across the river. Thackwell then sent back his pontoon-train and his two heavy cannon to Ramnagar, under escort of a regiment of native cavalry, two companies of infantry and two guns, with a letter to Gough reporting that he stood on the north bank of the Chenab.

Dec. 2. At 2 P.M. Thackwell began his march down the right bank in order of battle, traversed about ten miles without seeing a sign of the enemy, and finally halted at dusk at the village of Daurawala. Here he received a message from Gough, saying that he would make every demonstration that he could in order to hold the enemy before Ramnagar, but bidding Thackwell above all things to bring his troops up fresh. Thackwell,
Dec. 3. accordingly, marched at six next morning, clearing the

[1] Wylly, *Military Memoirs of Sir Joseph Thackwell*, pp. 246-250.

enemy's detachments from the north bank as he passed, with every intention of falling on the left flank and rear of the Sikhs' main position. He had reached a point two miles south of the Garhi-Galla ford when he received, in quick succession, three letters, two of them from Gough and one from an officer of his staff. Both of Gough's letters were dated on the preceding day, the first announcing that he should continue his demonstration on the 3rd and try to force a passage; the second, that the enemy was withdrawing from his front but still keeping the fords well protected. The staff-officer gave Thackwell definite orders not to move to the attack, after he had mastered the ford of Garhi, until reinforcements of a brigade of cavalry and Godby's brigade of infantry should reach him. Thackwell accordingly halted, sent a detachment to hold the ford of Garhi, pushed Nicholson's horse well ahead, occupied four villages in his immediate front, and himself rode down to look to the disposition of the troops guarding the ford. During his absence Nicholson sent in reports of Sikh horse to the front; and, on the General's return, the opening of the Sikh artillery showed him that the enemy was present in force. Shere Singh, in fact, had answered Gough's demonstration by a little demonstration of his own, and slipped away from before him to throw all his strength upon Thackwell. 1848. Dec. 3.

The villages being surrounded by fields of tall and thick sugar cane, Thackwell withdrew his troops from them and fell back a couple of hundred yards to open ground immediately before the village of Sadullapur. This movement was construed by the Sikhs as a retreat; and Shere Singh, who was present in person, rapidly developed his attack, filling the cane-fields with his infantry, firing heavily from twenty guns, some of them of heavy calibre, and manœuvring to threaten both of Thackwell's flanks with his cavalry. Thackwell easily drove back the Sikh horse with his own cavalry and horse-artillery, but did not venture to assail the infantry. The action was therefore continued as a duel of

1848. artillery for some two hours, when the Sikh fire
Dec. 3. slackened, and Thackwell directed his cavalry on the right to charge and capture the guns if they saw a favourable opportunity. But no opening offered itself; and it was not until 3.30 P.M. that Thackwell received a further message from Gough, authorising him to act as he might think best, whether the reinforcements had joined him or not. He then decided that at so late an hour it would be inexpedient to advance to the attack, and the action came to an end.[1] Thackwell's casualties did not exceed seventy-six; those of the Sikhs were probably heavier, for many corpses were found in the cane-fields and in the wells of the villages.[2] But the affair was little more than a skirmish, neither side being willing to close with the other.

Gough was deeply chagrined. He had, he declared, "placed the ball at Thackwell's foot, and Thackwell had declined to kick it." But the main fault lay with Gough himself, for he had been completely outwitted by Shere Singh. True to his promise, Gough had kept his cannon steadily at work all through the 2nd and 3rd; but the Sikhs had withdrawn most of their troops and all but six guns, which were so craftily concealed that the British guns could not silence them. Gough, therefore, was wasting ammunition against half-empty trenches, while Shere Singh had moved off in strength to overwhelm Thackwell; and it is noteworthy that Gough made no attempt, in spite of his professions to Thackwell, to force a passage at Ramnagar. He seems to have had some inkling of the true state of affairs, otherwise he would not have promised further reinforcements to Thackwell and forbidden him to attack without them. As a matter

[1] Colin Campbell (see *Shadwell*, i. 195 *sq.*) averred that he twice begged Thackwell's leave to attack with his infantry. Thackwell denied this, and I believe Thackwell. An officer who wished to run back to Ramnagar because the ford at Khanki was impracticable, shows no very enterprising nature.

[2] Thackwell, *The Second Sikh War*, p. 97.

of fact, the cavalry which should have joined Thackwell by the ford of Garhi-Galla never joined him at all, and only part of Godby's brigade reached him on the morning of the 4th. The ford, in fact, was too deep for them to pass on foot, and the channels were too many to be crossed by pontoons; and Godby was only able to carry his men over the river by using boats which Thackwell had sent down from Wazirabad. The fact seems to reflect upon the work of Gough's staff, but it is certain that the ford has been carefully examined, and that full reports had been sent to Gough. There is, however, nothing more treacherous than a glacier-fed river; and it is likely enough that the fords were never the same for twenty-four hours together. 1848. Dec. 4.

Such miscarriages as these are the commonplaces of war; but it is certain that Gough was convinced in his own mind that he had given Thackwell full discretion to attack, whether that officer should have received his reinforcements or not, and he intimated as much in his despatch. His good faith cannot be called in question, and, as his staff kept no copies of the orders sent to Thackwell, Gough did not know what he had or had not bidden him to do. All that he did know was that, in Thackwell's place, he would have attacked. Whether Thackwell should not have thrown all orders to the winds and fallen at once upon Shere Singh is a question that cannot be profitably discussed. Thackwell was an officer of long experience, who had served in the cavalry throughout the Peninsular War, lost an arm at Waterloo, commanded the cavalry under Keane in the first stage of the Afghan War, and under Gough at Maharajpur and at Sobraon. He knew that he was engaged in a very critical operation. He had been told that Gough contemplated pushing across the river at Ramnagar; and, with the Commander-in-chief's orders before him, he might well have concluded that his function was to contain the force opposed to him, while Gough forced the passage.

1848. Gough, on the other hand, considered that it was for
Dec. him to contain and for Thackwell to attack; and the truth seems to be that Gough was certainly in the dark as to the enemy's movements, and by no means very clear as to his own plans. He considered that an opportunity had been lost; and perhaps he was right. But a commander who desires opportunities to be seized should give a subordinate a free hand.

However, the passage of the Chenab had been won at a trifling cost, and that was, after all, the main point. The Sikhs entrenched before Ramnagar slipped away on the night of the 3rd, abandoning sixty boats and destroying or burying eight guns and a quantity of ammunition. Shere Singh likewise withdrew from before Thackwell at midnight, and Thackwell pushed northward in pursuit with the cavalry under his personal command on the morning of the 4th, but saw no sign of the enemy. Gough, who appears not to have been aware of the withdrawal of the Sikhs from his front until 8 A.M., sent the Ninth Lancers across the ford of Ramnagar to follow them up; but Major Hope Grant, who was in command, though he obtained contact with their rearguard, was unable to press them owing to the density of the jungle. Grant joined Thackwell that night; and Thackwell on the
Dec. 5. next day sent his advanced squadrons as far as Dinga, but without overtaking any of the enemy's troops or
Dec. 6. guns. On the 6th he received orders to form a
Dec. 7. standing camp at Helan; and on the 7th came news that Shere Singh, reinforced by four regiments and twelve guns from Peshawar, had entrenched himself on the Jhelum between Mong and Rasul. But it was impossible for Gough to follow him up with his whole army, because the Commissariat was unable to feed it. Moreover, Dalhousie absolutely forbade further advance beyond the Chenab, "except for the purpose of attacking Shere Singh in his present position," without permission sought and gained from the Governor-general. No Commander-in-chief could

undertake military operations upon such terms, for, 1848.
if Shere Singh chose to shift his position when Gough reached it, Gough would have to wait for a messenger to go to Ambala, where Dalhousie had taken up his quarters, and to return with, or without, the necessary permission. Indeed, Dalhousie intended that his words should amount to prohibition of any forward movement.

The Governor-general was not too well pleased with the course of events. He complained that Gough had insisted upon starting before his commissariat arrangements were completed; and this was true; but it was Dalhousie's doing that they had been begun so late, and it was Currie's entreaties that had stimulated Gough to haste.[1] He was annoyed, too, because Gough wished him to fire a royal salute for the passage of the Chenab, which, very reasonably, Dalhousie declined to treat as a great victory. Lastly, over and above Gough's difficulties of transport and supply, Dalhousie reflected, quite truly, that the General's communications were insecure, and that he had no reserve whatever. Gough himself had doubts whether he were in sufficient strength to attack the Sikhs on the Jhelum until the fall of Multan should have released the troops employed, or to be employed, in the siege, for the reinforcement of the main army.[2] Dalhousie took him at his word, and made Gough's further offensive movements contingent upon the capture of Multan. Beyond doubt, if Dalhousie had listened to Gough in the first instance, troops would have been at hand to furnish a reserve, the Commissariat would have been fully equipped, and the siege of Multan—a flagrant blunder—would not have been undertaken. But it was the Governor-general's duty to face facts as they were, not as they might have been, and having faced them he pronounced his judgement. Gough accordingly halted, and made his preparations to concentrate at Wazirabad.

Meanwhile Whish, taking note of the departure

[1] Rait, ii. 179. [2] Burton, p. 91.

1848. of Shere Singh with his troops from Multan, and of
Dec. 7. the consequent weakening of Mulraj's force, attacked the latter under the walls of the city on the 7th, capturing his position, together with five guns.[1] On the 25th Whish reoccupied his original station before Multan, and Colonel Cheape, the Chief Engineer, thoroughly reconnoitred the enemy's works against the arrival of the reinforcements from Bombay. These arrived at last under the command of Brigadier-general Dundas[2] on the 22nd of December, having been needlessly delayed for a month by the stickling of the Bombay government over a point of military etiquette. Whish's numbers were thus raised to about fifteen thousand regular troops, besides Edwardes's levies; and on the 26th he issued his orders for an attack on the suburbs to the south-west of the city, so as to clear the ground for the erection of his batteries.
Dec. 27. The onslaught was delivered at noon on the 27th in four columns, each about one thousand strong, two of them led each by five companies of the Sixtieth and the remaining two by three companies of the Tenth and as many of the Thirty-second. It was perfectly successful at a cost of rather more than two hundred casualties. Of these the larger part fell upon the Bombay troops; but the Sixtieth escaped lightly from the extreme skill of the men in taking cover. It is worthy of notice that the Sikhs in this engagement fired shrapnel-shell, showing that they had learned something from their enemies.

On that same evening Whish established three batteries containing altogether thirteen mortars; on the 29th batteries of two twenty-four pounders, six eighteen-pounders and four heavy howitzers were

[1] The troops engaged were one horse-battery, the 11th Irreg. Cav., detachments of the 7th Irreg. Cav., H.M. 10th and 32nd Foot, 8th, 49th, 51st and 52nd N.I. Their casualties were 3 killed and 58 wounded.

[2] One horse-battery, two light field-batteries, 1st Bombay L.C. and Sind Horse; 2 cos. Sappers; H.M. 60th Foot; 1st Bombay Europeans; 3rd, 4th, 9th, 19th Bombay N.I.

added; and on the 30th five more mortars of large calibre. The fire of these heavy pieces was crushing. On the morning of the 30th the enemy's principal magazine in the citadel was blown up by a shell, and by evening practically every gun had been silenced. By the 2nd of January 1849, two practicable breaches had been made, and on that day Whish gave orders for the storming of the city on the morrow. The work was entrusted to two columns. The right column, under Brigadier-general Markham, made up of the Thirty-second Foot, and the Forty-ninth and Seventy-second Native Infantry, all of the Bengal Division, was to assault near the Delhi Gate; the left column, consisting of the First Bombay Europeans,[1] and the Fourth and Nineteenth Bombay Native Infantry, under Brigadier-general Stalker was to assail a breach at an angle of a work named the Khuni Burj. By 2 P.M. the troops were in their appointed places, and at 3 P.M. the signal was given to advance. 1848. 1849. Jan. 2.

Markham's column was led by two companies of the Thirty-second under Captain Smyth, which, on surmounting the breach, found that the city wall, thirty feet high and quite impracticable, was standing intact within it. Smyth at once decided to retire and fall back upon the main column, which was promptly led by Markham to the other breach by the Khuni Burj. Stalker's column had already entered it, the storming party being composed of three companies of the Bombay Europeans under Captain Leith. The enemy's fire was kept down by a battery and by the accurate fire of the Sixtieth's rifles. Colour-sergeant John Bennet was the first to mount the breach, planting his colour on the summit and standing by it until the entire column had passed. The Sikhs had entrenched the breach and broken up the ramparts by traverses, but all resistance was speedily overcome; and the troops streamed into the town in small bodies through a maze of narrow lanes, each party fending for itself and following wher- Jan. 3.

[1] The 103rd.

1849. ever the flying enemy might lead them. By nightfall the town had been completely cleared, but the men were scattered in all directions, and it was impossible in the darkness to set up communication between them. What happened during those obscure hours no one has told us; but in the course of the night one of the enemy's powder magazines exploded and destroyed several men. By daylight order was restored; and there now remained only the citadel, containing, as was reckoned, about two thousand men, which was at once
Jan. 6. closely beset. By the 6th two mortar-batteries were smothering this last stronghold in shells, and Mulraj asked for terms; but, being answered that Whish would hear of nothing but unconditional surrender, he prolonged his resistance. In the course of the next few days twenty-two more heavy pieces were brought into position, and a sap was begun, with the object of blowing up the counterscarp. The enemy stood manfully to their guns for a time, but on the 18th Mulraj's followers began to desert him; and on the
Jan. 22. 22nd he surrendered. Between three and four thousand men laid down their arms; and Vans Agnew and Anderson were avenged.

It does not seem that Mulraj's people made a very good fight at Multan. The assault on the 3rd of January cost only two hundred and fifty casualties, many of which were due to the accident of the explosion, and even so the slain did not exceed seventeen. The Bombay Europeans suffered most heavily, losing four killed and fifty-nine wounded, chiefly, no doubt, among the storming party. Whish seems to have done his work swiftly and resolutely, having abundant force at his disposal. Being an officer of the Indian artillery, who had served at the siege of Bhurtpore, he had experience of such operations; and it is therefore the more surprising that he should have fixed the hour of the assault for three o'clock of an afternoon which was within a fortnight of the shortest day. He must have known that, however rapid his success, night must

close down before he could collect his troops after the excitement and disorder of the storming; and that they would inevitably disperse in all directions to plunder and despoil. It appears to be no exaggeration to say that for twelve hours he utterly lost control of the attacking columns; and it is very clear that they passed their time plundering by the light of torches, and so kindled a certain number of houses, one of which was a powder magazine. In fact, from General Stalker's report,[1] it seems to have been a miracle that there were not many more accidents of the same kind. Fortunately, as is usual in the assault of an Indian fortress, all resistance ceased, practically, as soon as the assailants had made good their footing; but a resolute little band of the enemy might, for all that can be seen to the contrary, have cut them to pieces in detail during the night. The whole proceeding was characteristic of the old school of generals in the Indian army. 1848.

[1] *Blue Book*, Punjab Papers, 1847-1849, p. 527.

CHAPTER XXXVII

1848. The capture of the city of Multan produced its natural reaction upon Dalhousie's plans. Already they had been affected by the news that Attock, since the first
Dec. week of December, stood in the greatest peril. Gough had written on the 11th that his difficulties of transport, supply and communications were being overcome; and on the 17th the Governor-general more or less withdrew his prohibition of an attack upon the enemy on the Jhelum.[1] Gough, during the period of inaction, had made frequent reconnaissances of the Sikh position,
Dec. 18. but not until the 18th did his head-quarters cross the Chenab, Shere Singh having on that day advanced ten thousand men to Dinga, as if to threaten the British communications by way of Wazirabad. The movement was but a feint, for in a few days the Sikhs retired, and
Dec. 29. on the 29th Gough's head-quarters moved forward five miles north of the Chenab to Januki. On that same day an Afghan army, under the Amir Dost Mohamed in person, joined Chattar Singh before Attock. The garrison, long wavering, lost heart altogether; and
1849. Herbert, realising that they would resist no longer,
Jan. stole away on the night of the 2nd of January, and left the fortress to its fate. On the 7th Dalhousie, heartened by the news of the surrender of Multan, wrote to Gough that he would rejoice to hear of a similar blow struck at the Sikhs upon the Jhelum. On the 10th came the news of the fall of Attock; and Major Mackeson, the political officer at Gough's head-quarters,

[1] Lee-Warner, *Life of Marquis of Dalhousie*, i. 200-201.

strongly urged an immediate attack, before the forces of Chattar Singh should have time to join those of Shere Singh. Gough was nothing loth. He pronounced his army, though it had not been reinforced, perfectly competent to overthrow Shere Singh effectually; and he had already on the 9th moved forward three or four miles to Loah Tibbah. On the 11th he sent Dalhousie his rough plan of attack; on the 12th he marched to Dinga, within eight miles of the Sikh position; and on that evening he summoned his generals and gave them their orders for the fateful morrow. 1849. Jan. Jan. 12.

The Sikhs, once again, as at Aliwal and Sobraon, had taken up a position with a broad river, the Jhelum, in their rear, extending in a concave line from the village of Lakhniwala on their right to that of Rasul on their left, a distance, as the crow flies, of some six miles. Its front was towards the east, so that Rasul formed the northern and Lakhniwala the southern extremity of their array. The Sikh regular troops were distributed in a succession of villages on their right—the south—of this line. The Bannu troops were at Lakhniwala, to the strength of one regiment of horse and four of foot, with eleven guns; a mile to north of them at Chak-Fateh-Shah was Lal Singh with two regiments of horse, ten of foot and seventeen guns; yet another mile to northward at Laliani was Shere Singh, with one regiment of cavalry, nine of infantry, some four thousand irregular horse and twenty guns. Then came the irregular levies, some of them at Mong, in rear of Chak-Fateh-Shah, and thus in second line; and the rest stretching away to the northern extremity at Rasul. The whole were reckoned at some thirty thousand men with sixty-two guns.

In front of the enemy's entrenchments, from Laliani and Lakhniwala and beyond it, ran a line of low rugged jungly heights, sloping gently towards the eastern plain, by which Gough would approach it, but, to north and west of Rasul, falling down abruptly

1849. towards the river on the west in steep bluffs, precipitous
Jan. 12. cliffs and innumerable ravines. To north of Laliani this ridge abruptly changed its direction from north and south to east and west; the village of Rasul lying hard by the north-eastern extremity, among such a network of ravines as to be almost inaccessible. So far as can be gathered, this ridge of Rasul (as it may be named) was the only portion of the high ground which formed part of the entrenched position. Running as it did, almost at right angles to the main ridge, batteries erected upon it would of course enfilade that main ridge or any enemy advancing to the attack of it.

Jan. 13. After making allowance for camp-guards, Gough reckoned that he could bring into action about twelve thousand men and sixty-six guns;[1] and with these he marched on the morning of the 13th across a plain so thickly covered with jungle that he bore at first considerably to his right in order to avoid it. Before

[1] CAVALRY DIVISION: Thackwell.
1st Brigade: White—H.M. 3rd L.D.; 5th and 8th Bengal N.C.
2nd „ Pope—H.M. 9th Lancers and 14th L.D.; 1st and 60th Bengal N.C.

I. INFANTRY DIVISION: Gilbert.
1st Brigade: Mountain—H.M. 29th Foot; 30th and 56th Bengal N.I.
2nd „ Godby—2nd Bengal Europeans (H.M. 104th); 31st and 70th Bengal N.I.

II. INFANTRY DIVISION: Campbell.
1st Brigade: Pennycuick—H.M. 24th Foot; 25th and 45th N.I.
2nd „ Hoggan—H.M. 61st Foot; 36th and 46th N.I.
3rd „ Penny—15th, 20th and 69th Bengal N.I.

ARTILLERY: Tennant.
Horse-batteries: Brooke.
1st Brigade: Grant—Lane's, Christie's and Huish's.
2nd „ Brind—Warner's, Duncan's and Fordyce's.
Foot-batteries: Huthwait.
3 Field-batteries—Mowatt's, Robertson's and Dawes's.
2 Heavy-batteries—Maj. Horsford; Capts. Shakespeare and Ludlow (each of four 18-pdrs. and two 8-in. hows.).

changing his direction upon the village of Chilianwala he halted, and sent his heavy guns to dislodge a Sikh outpost from a mound before that village, which done, he mounted to the roof of a house to examine the enemy's position more closely for himself. The jungle in this quarter was much thinner, though sufficient still to baffle accurate observation; but Gough was in no hurry, for he had not made up his mind whether he should not confine the day's work to a reconnaissance in force, and defer the action until the morrow. It was certain that a frontal attack was out of the question, the left flank of the Sikhs at Rasul being unassailable, and the right protected by dense jungle. It was apparent, too, that the Sikhs had moved forward from their entrenched position; but the ground which they had taken up was too well screened for exact scrutiny; and Gough gave orders for the army to halt and encamp, and for the officers of engineers to go forward and make their report. The staff was already laying out the ground for the camp, when some Sikh horse-artillery advanced and opened fire upon his outposts. Gough ordered his heavy batteries to the front of Chilianwala village to answer this fire; and the challenge was taken up by a salvo from the whole length of the Sikh line. This revealed the position of the Sikh artillery; and it was evident that, if Gough encamped, the enemy would cannonade him throughout the night. Retreat was not to be thought of. The only course was to fight at once. 1849. Jan. 13

It was now about two o'clock, and Gough lost no time in forming his order of battle, while his heavy guns fired steadily upon the enemy's position. On his right was Pope's cavalry brigade with its three horse-batteries; then Gilbert's division with Godby's brigade on the right and Mountain's on the left, and Dawes's field-battery between them; then the two heavy batteries in the centre; then Campbell's division, with Pennycuick's brigade on the right and Hoggan's on the left, with Mowatt's battery between them and

1849. Jan. 13. Penny's brigade as reserve in rear; then Robertson's half-battery;[1] and then White's cavalry brigade, with its three horse-batteries, on the extreme left. In each brigade of infantry the British battalion occupied the centre with a native battalion upon either flank. The whole army was drawn up over against the centre of the Sikh line, which overlapped it upon both flanks, and was apparently about a mile distant from it.

At three o'clock Campbell, who had rather more ground to traverse than Gilbert, received the order to advance. He had decided that the density of the jungle forbade him to control both brigades of his division, so he left Pennycuick in independent command, merely telling the Twenty-fourth that there must be no firing but that the bayonet must do the work. This done, he galloped away to give his personal direction to Hoggan's brigade. Thereupon Pennycuick strode off at once; but, meeting with dense jungle, was obliged more than once to break from line into echelon of companies in order to take ground to the right. Under such disadvantages the accurate re-formation of the line was difficult, if not impossible; but the battalion, a very strong one of young soldiers, pushed on rapidly, until a belt of still thicker jungle compelled the companies to diminish their fronts and struggle through it as best they might. The Sikh batteries had opened fire, making the Colonel's word of command inaudible, and stimulating the haste of the men by the crash of the round shot through the branches. The Twenty-fourth outstripped Mowatt's battery, masking its fire, outstripped the native battalions on its flanks, and suddenly found itself on clear ground, breathless and disordered, with a natural glacis of grass before them, and at the summit, amid a network of water-pools, the enemy's line and the enemy's batteries. These opened fire upon them with deadly discharges of grape; but without hesitation the

[1] Three guns had been left with the camp-guard, and the 20th N.I. of Penny's brigade also.

Twenty-fourth made a rush for the guns and disappeared into a cloud of smoke, where, after a short fierce struggle hand to hand, they drove the Sikhs headlong from their pieces. 1849. Jan. 13.

There is no more dangerous moment than the climax of a successful attack. The men, wild with excitement, scattered and under no control, conceived that their work was done and busied themselves with spiking their trophies, the guns. Meanwhile the Sikhs, perceiving the weak numbers of their assailants, quickly rallied and came forward with reinforcements of infantry to the counter-attack. A shower of bullets smote the dispersed parties of the red-coats, and after a short but furious struggle they were hurled back out of the batteries. The two native regiments on their flanks, though they had not advanced so far, likewise gave way, though a few of each rallied and checked the pursuit of the Sikh cavalry. The brigade was utterly shattered. Pennycuick was shot dead near the guns, and his son, running to his assistance, was killed on his body. In the Twenty-fourth twenty-one officers and well-nigh five hundred men had fallen, nearly half of them killed; and in the two native regiments nearly three hundred more. The remnant fell back to the point from which they had started, by Chilianwala.

Meanwhile Hoggan's brigade under Campbell's personal direction had likewise advanced, and, though obstructed, albeit in a less degree, by jungle, made its way through it slowly and steadily, supported by Mowatt's battery on the right, and by Robertson's three guns and Brind's three horse-batteries on the left. The fire of these twenty-nine pieces silenced a heavy Sikh battery which would have enfiladed the advance of the brigade, and, thanks to them and to his own control of his troops, Campbell brought up his three battalions in a tolerably well connected line to the open ground beyond the jungle. Here they were faced by a large body of Sikh cavalry and regular infantry, the former,

1849. Jan. 13. apparently opposite to the Sixty-first, and the latter to the Thirty-sixth Native Infantry on its right. The Sixty-first charged the cavalry and sent it flying at once, but the Thirty-sixth were repulsed by the Sikh infantry, which promptly followed them up with two guns. Campbell thereupon changed the front of the two right hand companies of the Sixty-first to the right, and, while the remainder of the battalion was wheeling up to form upon them, these two companies charged and captured the two guns, and by their fire speedily checked the pursuit of the Thirty-sixth. The Sikhs thereupon brought up more infantry and two more guns, but these were quickly routed and their guns taken by the Sixty-first. Simultaneously the Sikh cavalry attacked the Forty-sixth, on the left of the Sixty-first, as it was moving up to the new alignment, but were repulsed. Hoggan's brigade, being now formed on the right flank of the Sikh line, advanced steadily, rolling it up. The Sikh cavalry more than once threatened its flank and rear, causing it to face about; but they were beaten off, and the Sixty-first pressed irresistibly on, charging and capturing thirteen guns, until they had passed the batteries which had repelled Pennycuick, and met Gilbert's left brigade.

Meanwhile the Sikh cavalry over against the British left had not been inactive, but had advanced in considerable strength to turn the left flank. Thackwell, who was with White's brigade, thereupon ordered a squadron of the Third Light Dragoons to charge them, and, if possible, to come down on the flank of the Sikh batteries. The Sikh horse appear to have given way at the very menace of an attack, whereupon the squadrons turned to the more serious business of assailing the batteries. Their advance lay through jungle and stunted trees, beyond which a line of the enemy's infantry was visible at the edge of a low thorny jungle, opening fire at a range of about one hundred yards. The bugle sounded the charge but

the native cavalry would not face the musketry, and retired, rallying behind the reserve regiment of their brigade. Captain Unett's squadron of the Third, on the other hand, crashed straight into the heart of the mass of Sikhs, and was at once desperately engaged. The Sikhs closed in upon their flank, but the Third cut their way through them and pressed on for half-a-mile, when, being much dispersed, they rallied in three or four small parties and charged back through the enemy to their first ground. Of one hundred and six of all ranks forty had fallen; but the Sikhs would not await another such charge and retired off the field. Thackwell then sent a troop of horse-artillery with a squadron of native cavalry for escort, to join Hoggan's brigade, keeping for the present the rest of his division to secure Gough's left flank. 1849. Jan. 13.

Meanwhile, not many minutes later than Campbell, Gilbert set his division in motion, keeping the whole of it well in hand and under his personal control. His right was protected by Pope's brigade of cavalry; and, seeing a large body of Sikh horse in the direction of Rasul, Pope detached two squadrons each of the Ninth Lancers and of the First and Sixth Light Cavalry with some guns, under Colonel Lane, to cover his right flank. Then, observing more Sikh cavalry in his front, he formed the rest of his brigade in a single line, and advanced on the same front with Gilbert. Pope was a lieutenant-colonel of native cavalry, who had shown great personal courage in his younger days, but was now past his work, and so infirm that he could not mount his horse without assistance. He knew nothing of wielding large bodies of cavalry, and his ideas of war were apparently limited by his past memories of work as a dashing young squadron-leader. It appears that while bringing his brigade on to its ground he had, partly owing to the density of the jungle, partly from sheer unskilfulness, faced his brigade already in a dozen different directions; and such irresolute handling does

1849. Jan. 13. not inspire men with confidence. However, having at last got his line formed, he moved forward at the trot, with no scouts thrown out, until he realised that he was not only masking the fire of his own horse-batteries, but actually overlapping the right of Godby's infantry brigade. Thereupon he reduced the pace to a walk and presently came to a halt, presumably in order to consider what he should do next. It is conjectured that he gave, or meant to give, the word "Threes right"; but a small party of Sikhs, marking that the line was stationary, charged down upon some of the native cavalry; and therewith the word, whatever it may have been (and from such a leader no word could have come as a surprise), was transmuted into "Threes about." Thereupon the whole brigade turned and made for the rear, some with a semblance of order and without undue haste, but the great majority at headlong speed, which grew steadily with the panic of terrified horses and men. They galloped through Huish's and Christie's batteries, upsetting horses, wagons and guns; and the Sikh horsemen, following in eager chase, cut down Christie himself with many of his gunners, put six guns out of action and carried off four more, two wagons and fifty-three horses. Not until the fugitives had almost galloped over Gough himself were they rallied by the members of his staff.

Through the flight of Pope's cavalry on his right, Gilbert's right flank was wholly uncovered, and he accordingly threw back Godby's brigade somewhat, while Mountain's, with Dawes's battery in line with the skirmishers in front, advanced steadily upon the batteries before the village of Laliani and carried them with the bayonet. Godby's brigade likewise came up shortly afterwards and stormed the batteries in its front with a rush, the Sikh infantry not standing to await their charge. The men had halted and were collecting their wounded, when fire was opened upon them from their rear; and other hostile bodies gathering in

upon both flanks surrounded the brigade completely. 1849.
Godby, quite unmoved, gave the word "Right about Jan. 13.
face," and the Hundred and Fourth advanced steadily, loading and firing, while Dawes's battery, which seems to have been everywhere, shattered a body of Sikh cavalry that was bearing down upon Godby's right flank. Godby then ordered a charge of the whole brigade to the rear, and, after a short but violent struggle, cleared himself from his perilous position, having driven off the Sikhs in every direction. Herein he was helped by Penny's reserve brigade, which had been ordered to do the work that Pennycuick had failed to do, but losing its direction, in the jungle, had joined the right of Gilbert's division instead of the right of Campbell's. This fact is significant of the blindness with which the whole action was inevitably fought.

Campbell by this time had joined Mountain, and Thackwell had closed in upon Campbell's left flank, though not in time to prevent the Sikhs from carrying off the guns spiked by Hoggan's brigade. The enemy was in full retreat upon Rasul, suffering somewhat from Lane's guns as they passed; and the battle was over. But Gough had gained little. He could not pursue from want of daylight, and he could not hold his ground from want of water. All ranks were exhausted and maddened with thirst at the close of the action; and many requests came to him for leave to go back for water. Gough's answer was, "I'll be damned if I move till my wounded are all safe"; and not until every wounded man had been carried off did he consent to move back to Chilianwala. Thus he could not prevent parties of Sikhs from returning and removing under cover of darkness all of their spiked and captured guns excepting twelve light pieces. Thereby not merely the trophies but the fruits of the battle were in great measure abandoned. Moreover, Gough had lost four of his own guns, and his casualties amounted to over twenty-three hundred

1849. killed, wounded and missing. The Sikhs no doubt
Jan. 13. suffered heavily; but the victory, if victory it could be called, was little to boast of.

The tidings of the battle filled the Indian government with dismay. Dalhousie wrote privately that the conduct of the action was beneath the criticism even of a militiaman like himself; and every pen in India bestirred itself to pass judgement upon it. In England it was set down by the official mind as a disaster; and within forty-eight hours it was determined to send Sir Charles Napier to command the Indian Army.[1] All of this was a little hysterical. It was generally assumed that Gough's hot Irish blood had, as usual, prompted him to butt his head against a stone wall. This was not so. He had thought out his plan of action, which was sound; and he was prepared, when he started, either to fight or to confine himself to a reconnaissance in force. This being so, he might certainly have marched earlier with advantage, so as to have daylight to follow up his victory, if victory he should win; but that he could have gained any knowledge of the Sikh position without a reconnaissance in force seems extremely doubtful. That, in the actual circumstances, he could have deferred a general action, seems impossible.

So he decided to fight, and began with an hour's cannonade, first of his heavy guns only, then of all of his artillery, before launching his infantry to the attack. And here it is to be noticed that the heaviest of the casualties did not fall upon Pennycuick's brigade, which counted altogether just under eight hundred killed and wounded, of which five hundred belonged to the Twenty-fourth. It was Mountain's victorious brigade which suffered most severely, the Twenty-ninth being the battalion that escaped most lightly.[2] It seems certain, therefore, that, if the Twenty-fourth had been

[1] Lee-Warner, *Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie*, i. 208-211.

[2] The casualties were: 29th, 241; 30th N.I., 285; 56th N.I., 316.

adequately supported by the two native regiments upon either flank, their sacrifices would not have been made in vain. On the other hand Pennycuick, who was a gallant and impetuous officer, appears to have hurried his men forward with undue haste, and without waiting for the support of the artillery. But here the question arises, why did not Campbell exert the same control over Pennycuick as over Hoggan? His answer was that the jungle prevented him; but Gilbert had the same difficulty to contend with, and mastered it successfully. The truth seems to be that Colin Campbell, who had only for a short time commanded a division, had not yet risen quite to the height of his new duties. He handled Hoggan's brigade in a masterly fashion, and accomplished great things at a cost of well under three hundred casualties in the three battalions; but herein he was materially assisted by Brind's batteries of horse-artillery on his left. If he had bestowed the same supervision over Pennycuick's brigade and looked to the careful support of its advance by the guns attached to the division, matters would no doubt have fallen out very differently. But Campbell gave apparently no orders except to tell the Twenty-fourth that "there must be no firing but that the bayonet must do the work." 1849. Jan. 13

The failure of the cavalry on the right was a misfortune which Gough could not have foreseen; but, if it was he who was responsible for the appointment of Pope to the command of the brigade, then he deserves no sympathy. No man who knew the alphabet of cavalry-tactics would have moved the whole of his squadrons forward in line, without any support; and it is very obvious that Pope, incompetent and ignorant at the best of times, was absolutely unfit, physically, for active service. To place good regiments, and both the Ninth Lancers and Fourteenth Light Dragoons were good regiments, under the command of such a man, was like placing valuable porcelain in the hands of a child. The casualties of Pope's

1849. brigade in this unhappy affair were trifling, but the
Jan. 13. disgrace is not even now wholly forgotten.

On the whole, however, considering all the circumstances together, it seems that Gough has received far more censure for Chilianwala than he merited. War is a tricky game; and there never yet was a battle in which the Commander-in-chief's plans were not in some measure brought to naught. The difficulties of a fight under cover of thick jungle are very great, and chief among these is that of ensuring concerted action between the various units engaged. To gain this end above all things time is necessary. There must be no hurrying, or at any rate in theory there should be none. But two circumstances militated against a leisurely and methodical attack. The first was that Gough had allowed himself barely two hours' daylight; and the second was Campbell's directions to the Twenty-fourth to trust to the bayonet only. When men are falling fast under a heavy fire and are forbidden to answer it, a leader may well hasten his men on as the only chance of getting them forward at all. So, apparently, did Pennycuick; with the result that the Twenty-fourth alone followed him, that they gained their objective too soon, and that they were overwhelmed by a counter-attack before any support could reach them upon either flank. Whether it be a line of divisions extending for miles, or a line of companies extending for yards; whether the operation be one that lasts for minutes and hours or for days and weeks, the problem of co-ordination in attack and the penalties for failing in its solution remain always the same.

Jan. 14. It was well that Gough had taken care to collect his wounded for, before any movement could be made on the morning after the battle, the rain came down, and for three days fell incessantly, turning the ground into a sea of impassable mud. During this interval the army of Chattar Singh joined that of Shere Singh in his entrenched position at Rasul; and, when the

weather cleared, Gough decided that it would be impolitic to attack until he should be reinforced by the troops from Multan. He, therefore, decided to sit still, detaching two regiments of native cavalry under Lieutenant Hodson to Wazirabad, to guard against any attempt of the enemy to cross the Chenab. Dalhousie, it seems, was entirely of the same mind as Gough;[1] but in any case the General was firm in abiding by his resolution. The fall of Multan was imminent, and meanwhile there was no occasion for extreme haste. In the barren country on the Jhelum the Sikhs could not long subsist; and as early as on the 25th of January, Mackeson received intelligence which pointed to their early movement upon Gujrat. Shere Singh was, in fact, uneasy. He knew that shortly he must withdraw from Rasul, but was unwilling to do so while Gough remained watching him. He was, in fact, in much the same situation as Massena before Torres Vedras, and at last, on the 2nd of February, he left the Bannu troops, some ten thousand men with twenty-seven guns, to hold the entrenchments at Rasul, and with the remainder of his force marched away to eastward. 1849. Jan. 14.

Then, like Massena, Shere Singh used every wile to lure Gough to a pitched battle. He made first for Khori and thence moved southward upon Dinga, as if to threaten Gough's communications. On the 12th he even made strong demonstrations of attack. Gough was not to be beguiled. He met the menace by pushing forward a few squadrons of cavalry and bided his time, knowing that he could foil any attempt of the enemy to cross the Chenab. Major Mackeson, the political agent at head-quarters, now became urgent for immediate action; but Gough was not to be hurried. On the 13th Brigadier-general Cheape arrived with a few squadrons of irregular cavalry from Multan, showing that Whish was near at hand; and on the 14th intelligence came in that the Sikh army had Feb. 12.

[1] Lee-Warner, *Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie*, i. 211.

1849. Feb. wholly evacuated Rasul and taken up a position at Gujrat, with intent, as they proclaimed, to march on Lahore. Then at last, on the 15th, Gough broke up his camp and struck southward twelve miles to Lasuri, thus bringing his army nearer than that of the Sikhs to the fords of the Chenab and making sure of his junction with Whish, who was now approaching Ramnagar. By Gough's orders Whish pushed forward the Fifty-third, a native battalion, two regiments of irregular cavalry and four guns, to reinforce Hodson at Wazirabad; and meanwhile Gough turned eastward by short marches, on the 16th to Pakha Masjid, on the 17th to Kunjah, from which point the enemy was visible about Gujrat, and on the 18th to Trikha. All these movements were made in order of battle, so that the Sikhs were kept in constant apprehension of attack. On the 18th Whish arrived at head-quarters; on the 19th Dundas's brigade, marching from Ramnagar, came up on Gough's left; on the 20th the main army advanced to Shadiwal, where Markham's brigade joined it; and Gough, having at last under his hand a force of twenty-four thousand men with ninety-six guns, was ready to strike a decisive blow.[1]

[1] GOUGH'S ARMY—21ST FEBRUARY 1849.

CAVALRY DIVISION: Thackwell.

1st Brigade: Lockwood—H.M. 14th L.D.; 1st Bengal L.C., detachments of 11th and 18th Irreg. Cav.

2nd „ Hearsey—3rd and 9th Irreg. Cav.

3rd „ White—H.M. 3rd L.D. and 9th Lancers; 8th Lt. Cav., Sind Horse, 2 troops horse-artillery.

1ST INFANTRY DIVISION: Whish.

Hervey's Brigade: H.M. 10th Foot; 8th and 52nd N.I., 1 co. pioneers, 1 troop of horse-artillery.

Markham's Brigade: H.M. 32nd Foot; 51st and 72nd N.I.; 2 troops horse-artillery; Dawes's light field-battery. 2 troops of horse-artillery in reserve.

Reserve: Hoggan— 5th and 6th N.L.C.; 45th and 69th N.I.; 1 Bombay light field-battery.

The Sikhs were drawn up about a mile to south of Gujrat in the form of a crescent, with both flanks slightly refused, facing to the south. In the centre were arrayed their regular infantry with their right resting on the dry bed of the Dwara, and their left on the flowing stream of the Katela, which runs into the Chenab about a mile below the battle-field. The space between these two channels measured roughly six thousand yards, and was covered by two or three fortified villages behind which the battalions were drawn up, with fifty-nine guns in the intervals between them. On either flank stood their cavalry, Dost Mohamed's Afghan horse being on the right. The total force was reckoned at sixty thousand men. Gough's plan was to contain their left centre and left with two brigades of cavalry; to throw his right wing against the enemy's right centre and force it back from the Dwara, and then, having thus ensured the passage of his left wing across the Dwara, to wheel up that left wing and crush the Sikh right centre between two fires. 1849.

Accordingly Lockwood's and Hearsey's cavalry brigades, with one troop of horse-artillery, formed his extreme right, from the Katela westward. On their

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2ND INFANTRY DIVISION: Gilbert.

Penny's Brigade: 2nd Europeans (104th); 31st and 70th Bengal N.I.

Mountain's Brigade: H.M. 29th Foot; 30th and 56th Bengal N.I.

3RD INFANTRY DIVISION: Campbell.

Carnegy's Brigade: H.M. 24th Foot; 25th Bengal N.I.

McLeod's „ H.M. 61st Foot; 36th and 46th Bengal N.I.; 2 light field-batteries.

Dundas's „ H.M. 60th Rifles; 1st Bombay Europs. (109th); 3rd and 19th Bombay N.I., 1 Bombay light field-battery.

HEAVY ARTILLERY:

Ten 18-pounders.
Eight 8-in. howitzers.

1849. Feb. left was Whish's division, Hervey's brigade in front and Markham's in second line; on the left of Whish stood Gilbert's division, Penny's brigade on the right and Mountain's on the left, and on the left of Mountain were the heavy guns.[1] Then the line was broken by the Dwara, on the western bank of which was Campbell's division, Carnegy's brigade on the right, McLeod's in the centre, Dundas's on the left, with Hoggan's Reserve in rear. On the left flank was White's cavalry-brigade under the personal direction of Thackwell. Allowing for camp-guards and the like, Gough brought into action about twenty thousand men.

Feb. 21. The morning of the 21st of February broke calm and cloudless. Soon after dawn the British were in array, and old Gough, conspicuous in his white fighting coat, rode down the line from right to left amid a roar of cheering. The Sikhs had taken up their positions early, so that there was no dust. The plain was open, sprinkled with villages and chequered by patches of cultivation but unscreened by jungle, and behind it loomed up the white chain of the Himalayas and the peaks of eternal snow. For nearly two miles the army strode forward and then the Sikh guns opened fire, prematurely, betraying alike the position and the range of their guns. Halting his line just in safe ground, Gough pushed his batteries forward, under cover of skirmishers; and at nine o'clock all, except two reserve-batteries, opened fire, the lighter pieces at six hundred, the heavier at eight hundred to a thousand yards. The Sikh guns answered them with their usual rapidity and precision and not without effect, but the two reserve-batteries soon saw and seized an opportunity to enfilade one of the Sikh batteries,[2] and to silence it. This was only a beginning. For two hours and a half the cannonade

[1] Burton, p. 211, places Mountain's brigade west of the Dwara, and in his plan shows it first to west and later to east of it. Gough's despatch says plainly that Gilbert's division was on the right (east) of the Dwara.

[2] Brigadier-general Tennant's Report, *Blue Book*, p. 602.

continued with overwhelming violence; and the Sikh fire became feebler as gun after gun was dismounted and group after group of the gunners was destroyed. 1849. Feb. 21.

Meanwhile the Sikh horse opposite to Gough's right had come into action early, advancing first in heavy masses upon the front of his cavalry. Hearsey, who commanded the two cavalry brigades in that quarter, willingly accepted the challenge, countering the movement chiefly by skilful use of his horse-artillery; and then the Sikhs endeavoured long and persistently to turn his right flank. Again and again Hearsey foiled them by skilful handling of his squadrons, but the enemy gave him no chance of closing with them; and this incessant manœuvring to the right led his force further and further from the line of the infantry on his left, until at length the flank of the infantry was exposed. Hearsey sent back Lockwood's brigade to protect it; and the Sikhs then tried to cut Hearsey's own brigade off from Lockwood. They were again thrown back by the guns of the horse-artillery; and then the two parties suddenly realised that the din of the main battle had moved away to northward, and the Sikh horse made off with Hearsey in pursuit.

By noon Gough decided that his cannon had fulfilled its task, and deploying his infantry ordered a general advance, still covered by the artillery. He was, however, cautious enough to direct Gilbert to push forward some light troops to force the Sikhs to disclose their position; and, when Gilbert's two batteries moved on with them, they drew down a very heavy and well directed fire from the Sikh batteries on either flank of the village of Bara Kalra. Gough's heavy guns, which were handled with little less activity than the lighter pieces, promptly came up to silence them; and, since the village seemed to be unoccupied, Gilbert directed a party of infantry to take possession of it. These were met by so staggering a fire of musketry from the loopholed walls

1849. Feb. 21. that they could make no progress, and Gilbert was fain to order up the Hundred and Fourth to their support. The village was held by some of the finest of the Khalsa troops, and the fighting was obstinate and bloody; but the Hundred and Fourth were not to be denied, and after a stern struggle drove the defenders out. The Sikh guns in rear of the village now opened impartially upon friend and foe; and the defeated Sikh infantry, rallying when they realised how few were their assailants, returned to the counter-attack. The situation was critical, when some guns of Fordyce's horse-battery, which had fallen back to replenish with ammunition, galloped up and, with a few rounds of grape, added to the volleys of the Hundred and Fourth, checked the onslaught of the enemy, who slowly and sullenly retired.

Simultaneously the Tenth Foot and Eighth Native Infantry of Hervey's brigade attacked the village of Chota Kalra, further to the right. Here again the resistance was stubborn; and the menace of the Sikh cavalry on the right flank compelled Hervey to take ground to the right and to throw back his third battalion in echelon to his right rear. Markham's brigade, however, came forward to fill the gap, and Hervey, with the help of Mackenzie's and Anderson's horse-batteries, mastered the village and threw the enemy back. Campbell's division on the left advanced without firing a shot, the guns having cleared all before them. There was one point where the Dwara made a bend almost in the same straight line with the Sikh front and where they had infantry and heavy guns in position; but these were driven out and silenced by enfilading fire from the British cannon. On the extreme left Thackwell, even as Hearsey, was threatened with the turning of his outer flank by the Sikh cavalry; but Duncan's and Huish's horse-batteries checked the enemy in front, and the Sind Horse, with a squadron of the Ninth Lancers, repelled the flanking attack by a brilliant charge.

The general advance of the infantry turned the retreat of the Sikhs into a flight. They were thoroughly routed as they had not been since Aliwal, and, throwing away their arms, they dispersed in every direction. Thackwell pressed on rapidly in pursuit to cut the fugitives off from Jhelum, and did not cease until he was twelve miles beyond Gujrat, and the horses of his two batteries could trot no more. Hearsey, vying with his chief, continued the chase for fifteen miles beyond Gujrat, and did not return to camp until ten o'clock at night. Darkness gave the enemy a short respite; but, at dawn of the 22nd, Gilbert with his own division, Fordyce's and Dawes's batteries, the Fourteenth Light Dragoons and the Eleventh Irregular Cavalry, began the hunt anew north-westward, while Campbell was sent northward towards Bhimbar, whither a large body of Sikhs were supposed to have fled. Campbell returned on the 25th having found no trace of the enemy. Gilbert, moving by Sikri Wala and Puran to Naurangabad, heard there on the 24th that the fugitives were in the act of passing the Jhelum, and hastened with his mounted troops to the ferry, to arrive just too late. A host of Sikh irregulars, some twenty thousand strong, was seen on the opposite bank, but they were out of his reach. Hearsey joined him with his brigade in the evening; but Gilbert was for the present brought to a standstill.

1849. Feb. 21. Feb. 22. Feb. 25.

Since the battle Gilbert had traversed a distance of over fifty miles in seventy-two hours, and it is probable that in that exhausted country there was little forage for his transport-cattle. In any case he seems to have halted for three days, when, leaving a regiment of native cavalry to watch the enemy, he on the 27th marched to Sukhlajpur, and, with a small escort of all three arms, set himself to find a ford over the Jhelum. He discovered one which was hardly practicable for infantry; and occupied an island between two channels of the river in some force, having noticed that the enemy were in some strength on the opposite bank. But

Feb. 27.

1849. his mere presence was enough to alarm the Sikhs into
Feb. further flight; and, having crossed the Jhelum on the 28th, he steadily continued the pursuit. By the 8th
Mar. 8. of March he was within thirty miles of Rawal Pindi, where the Sikhs, some sixteen thousand strong, had halted. On that day Shere Singh, Lal Singh and some four hundred followers came in, bringing with them the British prisoners that had been captured at Peshawar and Attock; and on the 9th Shere Singh returned to Rawal Pindi to arrange for unconditional submission. Gilbert, however, pursued his march, receiving the surrender of odd parties and chiefs on the 10th and 12th, and the final surrender of the whole
Mar. 14. at Rawal Pindi on the 14th. In all there were delivered up twenty thousand stand of arms and forty-one guns; and the power of the Sikhs was finally broken.

It remained to drive the levies of Dost Mohamed from the province of Peshawar, and Gilbert lost no time over it. Starting on the 15th of March, he was on the 16th at Wah, within thirty miles of Attock, where he heard that the bridge of boats at that point was still standing and that the fortress itself was occupied by Afghan troops. Realising the importance of securing this bridge he started upon a forced march on the evening of the 16th, reached Shamsabad at sunrise, and, pushing on with his cavalry and artillery only,
Mar. 17. reached Attock half-an-hour before noon of the 17th, the guns coming up an hour and a half later. He found the fort of Attock evacuated, and the Afghan rear-guard in the act of crossing the bridge; but his troops had hardly shown themselves before the bridge was hastily broken up, many of the boats floating down the river. Upon the opposite bank the Afghans were drawn up in force with batteries in position; but they were careful to move off before Gilbert's guns arrived. On the 19th Gilbert passed the river with the whole
Mar. 21. strength of his column, and on the 21st he entered Peshawar unresisted. The Afghan army had evacuated the place two days before, and fled, rather than re-

treated, through the Khyber pass. Thus the last work of the campaign was brilliantly done. 1849.

The victory of Gujrat came as a very timely answer to Gough's many detractors. Every pen in India had, after Chilianwala, been busy in decrying him, and dozens of officers, many of them unworthy to clean his spurs, had pointed out in the press how much better they could have managed things in his place. The Europeans in India have always been afflicted with a plague of writing, and at this time, and for some years past, they had developed the more alarming symptom of printing their writings. Some of these scribes were able men, as, for instance, Henry Durand and Henry Lawrence; a few had some literary gift; all were consumed by vanity of their literary powers, and not a few by sheer jealousy and spite.[1] Nothing more injurious to discipline can be conceived; and it can hardly be doubted that this criticism of seniors by junior officers played its part in the general demoralisation of the Indian army. Yet the practice was not condemned by the Indian government. In fact it seems actually to have been encouraged by the promotion of those who thus showed their literary powers; and it may be pleaded in extenuation that writing is, in a general way, less mischievous than drinking. But old George the Third was justified in his opinion, written nearly seventy years before, that a commercial company was quite unfit to be in charge of an army.

Gough, though bitterly hurt by these incessant attacks, would never condescend to notice them, thereby showing himself much greater than Colin Campbell and Charles Napier. Yet they added considerably to his difficulties, and were a constant source of worry and irritation. Not less severely was he tried by the incessant interference of the political agents.

[1] The last, or nearly the last, of this school of pretentious Anglo-Indian writers was Colonel Malleson. I know no historical, or pseudo-historical, writings more inaccurate, slovenly and untrustworthy than his.

1849. But fortunately he was endowed with great tenacity and very remarkable moral strength and courage. He had thought out the plan that he should follow after Chilianwala, and nothing could turn him from it. He was not going to be led northward by Shere Singh into the barren and difficult country beyond the Jhelum, where the war might be endlessly prolonged. He would do what Pompœdius failed to do with Marius, compel Shere Singh to come down and fight upon Gough's chosen ground and upon Gough's own conditions. With indomitable patience he bided his time, brushing away the political agents who were perpetually buzzing about him with unsolicited advice,[1] and he had his will. It is surely idle to contend that such a man, who moreover, as has been seen, held the soundest views upon all strategical questions, was not only a competent but a distinguished commander.

It remains to consider him as a tactician, and, if he be judged by his last and most successful battle, he must certainly receive his meed of praise. At Gujrat he had for the first time an army of respectable strength and an artillery superior to the enemy's; he used all three arms to the best advantage, and he won a crushing victory at no great cost of life. His casualties did not exceed ninety-six killed and just over seven hundred wounded; but these losses were heavier than he had expected, though through no fault of his. If Gilbert had not been deceived by the peaceful aspect of Bara Kalra he would have turned his heavy guns on to the village and have mastered it with little difficulty. As things were, the storming of the little stronghold cost Penny's brigade three hundred and fifty casualties, of which one hundred and fifty fell upon the Hundred and Fourth, and nearly as many upon the Thirty-first Native Infantry. Hervey's brigade, which attacked Chota Kalra, escaped with no more than one hundred and seventy killed and wounded. The artillery, who really did the brunt of

[1] Rait, ii. 268 n.

the work, lost rather over one hundred of all ranks; 1849.
but among these were no fewer than twenty-nine out of the ninety-six slain in the entire army. The plan of attack was precisely the same as at Chilianwala, but at Gujrat the action of the various units was properly co-ordinated under Gough's own eye, which could not exert the same control at Chilianwala owing to the jungle. In fact the impossibility of overlooking his force had been the cause of the heavy losses at all Gough's previous battles against the Sikhs; and it is worth while to consider whether, in these circumstances, he gave sufficiently clear instructions to his subordinate commanders.

Harry Smith's strictures upon the Commander-in-chief's omission to impart his plans to his divisional generals at Ferozeshah have already been quoted. At Sobraon, however, he admitted that every general and commander received full and detailed instructions, though he considered that his own place of attack had been wrongly chosen for him. Hardinge, quite independently of Smith, made much the same criticism. Gough, he wrote, "has no capacity for administration. He is at the outposts wonderfully active, but the more important points, which he dislikes, of framing proper orders and looking to their execution are much neglected." This defect, if it were present, points to the probability that Gough had no very efficient staff at his disposal; and this probability is confirmed by the fact that the staff kept no copies of the orders sent to Thackwell when he was sent off in independent command across the Chenab. But it seems to have been a real weakness with Gough that he could not resist taking personal command of small bodies of troops for trifling operations, when he had much better have left matters in the hands of his subordinates.[1] It is not an uncommon failing, but it is a serious one; for good administration, whether military or civil, consists in the wise delegation of

[1] Shadwell, *Life of Lord Clyde*, i. 184-186.

1849. authority; and a Commander-in-chief who insists on doing everything himself is sure of bad mishaps because he cannot be everywhere. This is probably the explanation of Harry Smith's criticism after Ferozeshah. As the result of that action Gough seems to have mended his ways.

But the harsh judgement passed upon Gough, and the wild talk about his fiery Irish temperament, rest chiefly upon the number of his casualties. These were not really excessive, though they seemed to be so because they fell with disproportionate severity upon his British troops. That they were heavy was due to a cause which has not, as it seems to me, been sufficiently emphasised. He had to encounter good infantry as well as good artillery. Much is made of the skill, gallantry and devotion of the Sikh gunners, and let them be duly honoured. Yet these qualities were equally shared by the Mahratta gunners, who had always stood until they were bayoneted by their pieces. But, in rear of the guns, the Mahratta infantry made little or no resistance, unless it were at Maharajpur; and therefore, when their batteries had been stormed, the fight was virtually over. The Twenty-fourth would have been victorious at Assaye or at Deig. But the Sikh infantry fought as obstinately as the Sikh artillery, and the troops, after taking the Sikh batteries, had to face and quell the Sikh musketry. This was something quite new in Indian warfare; and even newer and more disquieting was the Sikh practice of meeting attack by counter-attack. For such work Gough needed in every action as strong an army as he commanded at Gujrat, and the more so as he was almost invariably inferior in number and weight of cannon. Lines of assault were sufficient to push the Sikhs off their ground, but columns were needed to make the success decisive. The Sikhs owed their disaster at Sobraon mainly to their madness in fighting with their backs to a river.

Altogether Gough deserves far more honour than

has hitherto been accorded to him. He was no wild Irishman, but a good, sound scientific soldier, with nothing specially Irish about him except his boiling courage. His men adored him. Who would not have adored a chief who had ridden out alone into the thick of a heavy cannonade in order to draw fire away from his troops? In England the revulsion of feeling in his favour after Gujrat was immediate and generous, as it should have been. He was not the first commander who had won his crowning victory when his recall was on its way to him; but at least his successor, Sir Charles Napier, was worthy of high station, in marked contrast to the incompetent Admiral Pigot who superseded Rodney in 1782 after the battle of The Saints. Unfortunately, owing to the hysterical despatches of Dalhousie, Napier's commission ordered him to assume the command-in-chief immediately upon landing, which practically compelled Gough to resign. Napier behaved generously enough, saying that nothing would please him better than that Gough should order him to return home. Dalhousie also directed that during the rest of his stay in India Gough should be treated with his old honours as Commander-in-chief, and he omitted no opportunity of showing him personal deference and respect. Yet the old man could not but feel deeply hurt that he should have been so hastily condemned. A Viscountcy and the thanks of Parliament did something to comfort him; and an enthusiastic reception upon his arrival in England completely healed his wounded spirit. Finally the Duke of Wellington, who though past fourscore years of age still weighed his words, at a dinner at the United Service Club, spoke of Gough as "affording the brightest example of the highest qualities of the British soldier." Such eulogy from such a man should keep sweet the memory of gallant old Hugh Gough in the British army. 1849.

For the rest, the Punjab was annexed to the British dominions in India, and placed under the government

1849. of a board of three, two of them being John Lawrence and his brother Henry. Under them a number of specially chosen officers raised Sikh regiments of horse and foot, and worked indefatigably to reduce the chaos of the Sikh states to order. Much of their work was stern, for the country swarmed with masterless soldiers who were little better than banditti; and there is a curious picture of John Nicholson, whose nature revolted from taking human life, schooling himself to severity by holding his courts under a tree from which dangled the corpses of the condemned. Such an example shows that, while there was necessarily justice without mercy at the outset, there was no unthinking inhumanity; and the ultimate result proved the high capacity of the British officer for administration. Nor is such capacity confined to the Indian army, for it was strikingly manifested in the twentieth century in the Soudan. To dwell longer upon this subject in these pages is impossible; and yet no higher testimony can be brought forward to the ability, the broad, strong sense and the high moral spirit of the British officer.

Authorities on the Second Sikh War: The important original sources of information being in India I have been compelled to rely exclusively upon printed authorities. Raitt's *Life and Campaigns of Hugh, Viscount Gough*; Lee-Warner's *Life of the Marquis of Dalhousie*; Gough and Innes's *The Sikhs and the Sikh Wars*; Edwardes's *A Year on the Punjab Frontier*; Durand's *Life of Sir H. Durand*; Wylly's *Memoirs of the Life of Lieut.-Gen. Sir Joseph Thackwell*; Macpherson's *Rambling Reminiscences of the Punjab Campaign*; Thackwell's *Second Sikh War*; George Lawrence's *Forty-three Years in India*; *Leaves from the Journal of a Subaltern* (2nd Bengal Europeans); Coley's *Journal of the Sutlej Campaign*; Cole's *Sketch of the Siege of Multan*; Edwards's *Reminiscences of a Bengal Civilian*; Parliamentary *Papers on the War in the Punjab*, 1847-1849; Colonel Burton's *The First and Second Sikh Wars*; and the histories of the various regiments engaged.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

At the outbreak of the Afghan war, and at every critical period subsequent to that time, the Indian government had been harassed with the apprehension of trouble in Burma. It was evident that the Court of Ava was rapidly forgetting the lessons of 1826. The treaty of Yendabo provided for the protection of British merchants at Rangoon, and the King even agreed to receive a British resident at Ava. But two successive residents were treated with such indignity that it was decided to withdraw the British representative; and therewith there began oppression of British merchants and trading captains at Rangoon, rising to such a height that in 1851 the Governor-general, Dalhousie, demanded the removal of the governor of Rangoon and an indemnity for the injured British subjects. The Court of Ava answered on the 1st of January 1852, in terms of seeming compliance. 1852.
A new governor was sent to Rangoon, and the old one was allowed to return in triumph to Ava; but the new governor soon proved himself to be even worse than the old. He offered a deliberate insult to the British flag, which he declined to redress at the protest of the Commodore of the British squadron in the Irrawaddy; and the situation became so dangerous that on the 6th of January the Commodore ordered all British merchants and residents in Rangoon to repair on board his flagship, seized a Burmese vessel as a pledge for the satisfaction denied to him, and declared the mouths of the Irrawaddy to be in a state

1852. Jan. of blockade. On the 9th he towed his prize-vessel down the river. The Burmese war-boats followed him, and fire was opened upon his ship from Burmese stockades. Therewith three vessels of war cannonaded the stockades for two hours, sank one large war-boat, and having wrought much destruction and killed, as was reported, some three hundred Burmese soldiers, passed down the river and made for Calcutta.

Dalhousie's first measure was to reinforce the garrisons of the Tennasserim provinces and Aracan, and he then ordered the Commodore to return to Rangoon and demand an apology. The ships were fired upon as they went up the river. Further negotia-

Feb. tions came to naught, and in the middle of February Dalhousie resolved to send a military expedition to Burma. It was limited in the first instance to a brigade from Bengal and another from Madras, the whole under the command of Major-general Godwin, who had served in the first Burmese war in command of the Forty-first Foot. The lessons of that war were not wholly forgotten. A stockade was erected at Dumdum to test the effect of artillery fire upon such an obstacle; the Eightieth Foot received practical instruction in the work of escalade; and since the majority of the war-vessels and some of the transports were steamers—not only paddle-steamers but screw-steamers—the task of ascending the Irrawaddy could not but be much easier. The time chosen for the enterprise differed materially in 1852 from that of 1824. In the latter year the season of the monsoon had been preferred, so that there should be abundance of water in the Irrawaddy. The expedition of 1852 was timed to arrive at the beginning of April, about six weeks before the breaking of the rains.

The Bengal contingent was the first to arrive at

April. the mouth of the Rangoon river on the 2nd of April, the Madras contingent following four days later. Godwin and Admiral Austen, the naval Commander-in-chief of the station, sailed on the 3rd with the

Bengal troops for Moulmein, the capital of the British Tennasserim provinces, and on the 5th attacked Martaban, over against it on the Burmese border. The place was strongly fortified, but the guns of the war-vessels sufficed to break down all resistance, and the few troops landed were practically not engaged. On the afternoon of the 8th the Bengal contingent returned, and Godwin for the first time had his entire force under his hand,[1] altogether close upon six thousand men, rather fewer than half of them Europeans. April is the hottest month of the year in Burma, and cholera had already made its appearance, which was disquieting;[2] and, as the Burmese had long been active in fortifying Rangoon, it was evident that no time must be lost in beginning operations before the rains should set in. Accordingly on the 11th five war-steamers proceeded up the river and cannonaded the stockades upon both banks, utterly destroying those upon the left bank, where a magazine was blown up, and kindling those at Dalla on the right bank by the help of a small landing-party of seamen and marines. The Burmese batteries answered the ships, and several vessels were struck by their shot; but the damage done was not serious and the casualties were insignificant. Thus all was made safe for a landing, which was appointed to take place on the following day. 1852 April.

Since 1824 there had sprung up a new Rangoon about a mile north of the river. It was of quadrate form, very nearly a mile square, and surrounded by a ditch, abatis and a mud wall, the last about sixteen feet high and eight feet broad. At the north-eastern angle stood the Shwe-da-gon pagoda, which, with its enclosures, had been worked into the general scheme of the

[1] *Bengal Infantry Brigade*: H.M. 18th, H.M. 80th; 40th B.N.I.
Madras „ „ H.M. 51st; 5th, 9th and 35th M.N.I.
2 companies of Bengal Artillery.
3 „ „ Madras „
2 „ „ Madras Sappers and Miners.

[2] Laurie, *Rangoon*, 1852, p. 59.

1852. April. defences as a citadel. It was known that over twenty guns, some of them of large calibre, had been mounted in this citadel, and the strength of the entire Burmese garrison was reckoned at twenty thousand men; so that, if the enemy should make any resistance at all, there might be serious work at hand. All previous experience, however, promised an easy conquest, which was the more probable since the place was within fairly close range of the heavy guns and rockets of the ships.

Under cover of their fire the troops landed early in the morning of the 12th, and were formed into two columns, the Eighteenth, the Fifty-first and the Fortieth Bengal Native Infantry, with four guns on the right, a wing of the Eightieth and the Ninth and Thirty-fifth Madras Infantry on the left. Godwin moved off with the right column before the left was landed, fetching a compass so as to attack the eastern front of the citadel. He had not gone far when he was checked by artillery-fire from a stockade, known as the White House stockade, on his right front, while simultaneously Burmese skirmishers appeared in the jungle on his flank. These last were easily driven off, but the four guns fired away all their ammunition at eight hundred yards' range with no great effect, and not until two twenty-four-pounder howitzers had played for some time upon the stockade were four companies of the Fifty-first and the Madras Sappers ordered to carry it by escalade, which they did with little loss. Far more serious than the Burmese fire was the effect of the sun, which prostrated many men and was fatal to at least two officers. Godwin, therefore, decided to advance no further. The engineers burned the White House stockade, so as to render it untenable, and the troops bivouacked for the night six hundred yards to south of it, without molestation save for a single harmless volley of Burmese muskets.

Throughout the hours of darkness the ships con-

tinued to bombard the camp, and the greater part of the garrison seems to have seized the opportunity to quit it. The troops halted on the 13th, thankful for the rest owing to the intense heat, while the blue-jackets toiled all day, landing four heavy howitzers and dragging them up to the bivouac. About seven o'clock on the morning of the 14th the march was resumed, the advanced party being four companies of the Eightieth with four guns. These cleared away the Burmese skirmishers from the jungle and enabled the guns to get into position; but it was not until 10 A.M. that the heavy howitzers were brought forward, and meanwhile the fire of the Burmese artillery caused some little loss. At 11.30 the storming-party was formed of four companies of the Eightieth, two of the Eighteenth and two of the Fortieth Bengal Native Infantry, which advanced across a hollow for about half-a-mile upon the eastern face of the pagoda. The hill on which it stands was divided into three terraces, upon all of which guns were mounted, but there was a long flight of steps in the centre of these, and for this the storming-party made a rush. The Burmese gave way at once, and, before the main body could come up, the pagoda was taken. Its fortifications proved to be even stronger than had been expected. First came the ditch, then ten yards of abatis with a stout paling in the middle of it, then a row of great tree-trunks, three deep and touching each other, set vertically, then another barrier of tree-trunks laid horizontally, and finally a bank of earth tapering from forty-five feet of breadth at the base to twenty-four feet at the top. The guns captured in the entrenched camp numbered ninety and the wall-pieces eighty, and there was a vast quantity of ammunition. Yet the operations of the three days from the 12th to the 14th of April cost no more than seventeen of all ranks killed and one hundred and thirty-two wounded, the casualties of the Eighteenth, which suffered more heavily than any other corps, not exceeding forty-six.

1852. April.

1852. May. The losses of the fleet did not amount to twenty men.

Then followed a period of inaction with its inevitable result of an increase of sickness, the heat being intense, and cholera still abroad. Within the next month more than fifty men of the Fifty-first died, and the Forty-ninth Native Infantry had at one time three hundred men in hospital. Happily, the Burmese soon lost their fear of their enemies, and refugees speedily returned to Rangoon to work for them and to run up houses for them against the breaking of the rains. The bazaar, too, was well supplied with fresh fish, poultry and vegetables, so that there was no fear of the scurvy, which had been such an affliction to the British troops in Rangoon in 1824. On the 7th of May four or five hundred men were sent up the river in three steamers, and on the 8th disembarked for a march of seven miles inland, in the hope of catching the fugitive Burmese governor of Rangoon; but the expedition proved to be fruitless, and the troops suffered very greatly from the sun. On the 12th the Sixty-seventh Bengal Native Infantry arrived to reinforce Godwin, and on the 17th he embarked about eight hundred men, half of them of the Fifty-first, on three steamers, and proceeded with them and with a fourth steamer carrying a naval brigade, to Bassein. Descending the Rangoon river and ascending the Negrais, the flotilla passed along the whole length of the defences of Bassein, and at 4 P.M. on the 19th anchored over against their higher end without the firing of a shot. The troops were landed at once, and nearly half of them were ashore before the Burmese at last opened fire, when the flotilla answered with all their guns. A single company of the Fifty-first sufficed to storm a pagoda which was the centre of the Burmese defences on their right, and the bulk of the force was turned against a mud-fort of considerable strength on their left. Both were carried with little difficulty, while simultaneously the Naval Brigade

assaulted and captured a fort upon the opposite bank. 1852.
In less than an hour the whole affair was over, and May.
Bassein, together with eighty-six guns and wall-pieces, fell into Godwin's possession. The casualties did not exceed twenty-three of all ranks, of whom two natives only were killed, and fifteen, including four officers, were claimed by the Fifty-first. On the 23rd Godwin returned to Rangoon, leaving five hundred troops to hold Bassein, which Archibald Campbell had styled the Key of Burma.

The next incident was an attack of the Burmese upon Martaban at dawn of the 26th, which was repulsed without difficulty and with considerable loss to the enemy, whose retreat was cut off by gunboats sent up the river to Salween. Godwin then turned his attention to Pegu, the inhabitants of which had risen in insurrection against the Burmese; and on the 3rd of June two companies of infantry, with a few sappers and miners, seamen and marines, started up the river in boats towed by the steamer *Phlegethon*. The party seems to have gone to work in a very casual fashion, for next morning the military landed upon one bank, hearing the sound of firing between the Burmese and Peguese, and the naval contingent, under Commander Tarleton, on the other. Leaving no guard in charge of the boats, Tarleton marched inland after a body of Burmese, failed to overtake them, was fired upon from some ruined walls as he returned, drove the enemy from them, and then discovered that a party of Burmese had pounced upon his boats and plundered them. The military commander, having also intelligence of this, hurriedly marched back to the river, and the two forces returning to the boats recaptured them, and then gave their men rest until the afternoon. While they were thus halted a party of Burmese came down upon them, but took to their heels on being attacked; and the old town of Pegu was captured, after a travesty of a fight which did not cost twenty lives to both of the parties engaged. The place was made over, for

1852. May. political reasons, to a native garrison, which in a week or two was driven out by the Burmese, so that the whole expedition was an absolute futility.

The operations had now been proceeding for three months. The Burmese had been defeated in every encounter; Martaban, Rangoon and Bassein had been occupied; the Irrawaddy was straitly blockaded; and it was expected that the Court of Ava would show signs of submission. Since none were forthcoming, Commander Tarleton was sent up the Irrawaddy with five steamers to examine the defences of Prome. He did his work well, eluded the Burmese army that was awaiting him by taking his ships up an unusual July. channel, and, reaching Prome on the 9th of July, found it without a garrison. Having no troops, he could not occupy the city, and was fain to return, having wrought such destruction as he could among the defences of the place and the Burmese war-canoes, but accomplished, through no fault of his own, nothing more substantial than a bold and thoroughly successful reconnaissance. It does not appear, however, that any blame can be attached to Godwin. The native battalion which reached him in May may have made good his losses through action and disease, but no more. He had but six thousand men, a large proportion of them in hospital,[1] distributed in three different stations, and it would have been imprudent to disperse them still further by throwing a garrison into Prome. The Burmese might be a contemptible enemy, but they had, as had been seen in the former war, a quick eye for an exposed or isolated detachment, and they had the climate on their side.

On the 27th of July the Governor-general, Lord Dalhousie, arrived at Rangoon to examine the situation for himself, and, having decided that the operations must be conducted on a larger scale, returned on the Aug. 1st of August to Calcutta. On the 25th he issued orders for the augmentation of the force to two divisions,

[1] At Martaban the sick numbered 40 per cent of the strength.

with a total strength of about twenty thousand men,[1] and there was great activity at Rangoon in the preparation of a flotilla of transport-craft and armed boats, and in further fortification of the Shwe-da-gon pagoda. The reinforcements began to arrive in September; on the 16th and following days Reignolds's brigade was embarked for Prome; and on the 25th Godwin embarked likewise, Admiral Austen having already gone ahead in a steamer. The flotilla assembled on the 27th in Panhlaing Creek, and proceeding up the river arrived before Prome on the 9th of October, before which day the naval command had, through the Admiral's death on the 7th, devolved upon Commodore Lambert. As the steamers approached, the Burmese opened fire with guns and musketry, which was quickly silenced by the war-vessels. The flotilla then anchored; a few troops were landed on the same evening and had a slight brush with the enemy; and, when the remainder disembarked on the following morning, it was found that the enemy had evacuated the town, and fallen back upon their main body, said to be eighteen thousand strong, ten miles east of Prome. Godwin decided not to make any movement against them until Elliott's brigade, which had already received its orders, should have joined him. As this brigade

1852. Sept. Oct.

[1] BENGAL DIVISION: Brig.-general Sir John Cheape.
1st Brigade: Col. Reignolds, H.M. 18th.
H.M. 18th; 40th and 67th N.I.
2nd Brigade: Lt.-col. Dickinson, 10th N.I.
H.M. 80th; 10th N.I.; 4th Regt. Sikhs.
3rd Brigade: Lt.-col. Huish, 37th N.I.
101st (Bengal Europeans); 37th N.I.; Ludhiana Regt.; 1 Light Field-battery.

MADRAS DIVISION: Brig.-general S. W. Steel.
1st Brigade: Col. Elliott, H.M. 51st.
H.M. 51st; 9th and 35th N.I.
2nd Brigade: Brig.-gen. McNeill.
102nd (Madras Europeans); 5th and 19th N.I.
3rd Brigade: H.M. 84th; 30th and 46th N.I.
Sappers and Miners; 1 troop Horse Artillery; 3 cos. Foot Artillery.

1852. Nov. could not move until the flotilla had descended the river to Rangoon, it was not until November that the last of it was embarked; and meanwhile Godwin returned to Rangoon, leaving Cheape in command at Prome.

Godwin's next enterprise was to lead a second expedition, made up of detachments of the Hundred and First, Hundred and Second and Madras Fusiliers, together about one thousand strong, to the capture of Pegu. These troops embarked on the 19th of November, anchored a little below Pegu at sunset of the 20th, and landed at five in the morning of the 21st in dense fog. The river at this point was only one hundred yards wide and so shallow that the war-vessels could give no assistance; but a couple of heavy howitzers were disembarked, and the advance began. The Burmese, of course, looked for an attack upon the eastern wall facing the river, so Godwin decided to assault the southern wall, which involved a march of about two miles through grass, breast-high, and very dense jungle. The troops had hardly entered it when the Burmese opened fire from all sides and maintained it continually. Godwin called forward a working-party to clear a track, pushing out a company of native infantry to cover them; but the work took long, and meanwhile the men became much scattered. For more than four long hours they floundered on under an incessant rain of bullets in stifling heat, with the sun blazing down upon them. At last the leading files, with Godwin at their head, emerged opposite a gateway which was the appointed place of assault; but the men were too much exhausted to move further. With great difficulty about two-thirds of the Europeans were collected, and, after a short rest, were urged on by Godwin to the assault. With the first rush resistance, as usual, collapsed at once, and by 1 P.M. Pegu was in Godwin's possession at a cost of fewer than fifty casualties. But the fight, to judge by the accounts of those who took part in it, was a blind and unpleasant

affair,[1] for nothing could be seen except occasional puffs of smoke, nor heard, except the whistle of bullets and the roll of musketry; no one knew very clearly what was going on, and it was difficult to convey orders to any officer, for no one could say where he was to be found. Had the enemy been Kafirs or Ashantis the result might have been disastrous; but with the Burmese it was safe to take almost any risk. 1852. Nov.

Leaving two hundred of the Hundred and Second, and as many native infantry with two guns, under command of Major Hill to garrison Pegu, Godwin on the 22nd returned with the remainder to Rangoon. Hardly was his back turned when, at nightfall of the 24th, the Burmese made an unsuccessful attack upon the gunboats lying off Pegu. On the 27th they assailed not only the gunboats, but also the pagoda which formed the citadel of Pegu, in both cases without success. On the night of the 3rd of December they renewed their onslaught on the garrison, and on the night of the 5th they intercepted a commissariat-boat, guarded by twenty-four sepoys, which was on its way up the river from Rangoon, burned the boat and captured all but two of the guard, who brought the news to Pegu. Hill sent out a party to the river, which rescued the survivors without difficulty; but on the morning of the 6th the enemy closed in upon the pagoda in great force and thenceforward held it besieged under continual fire both day and night. Meanwhile the Commodore, learning the fate of the boat sent up on the 5th, despatched Commander Shadwell, with six armed boats on the 8th, to reopen communication with Pegu. On the 10th Shadwell reached the landing-place, but found it defended by large bodies of Burmese, and after losing thirty-two killed and wounded—about one-fourth of his strength —was fain to return to Rangoon for reinforcements. Dec.

Meanwhile urgent messages came in from Hill

[1] See Laurie, *The Second Burmese War*, pp. 101-109, 466-468.

1852. Dec. reporting that he was hard pressed and that his ammunition was running short; but unfortunately two of the river-steamers needed repair and could not be made ready until the 11th. On that night Godwin embarked thirteen hundred men upon them and upon a flotilla of boats, and at daylight of the 12th the whole started for the Pegu River. On the 13th there also left Rangoon a column of four hundred sepoys, a battery of horse-artillery and a troop of irregular horse, which was ordered to march upon Pegu by land under the command of Lieutenant-colonel Sturt of the Sixty-seventh Native Infantry. The flotilla reached its appointed landing-place, some five miles below Pegu, on the afternoon of the 13th, and the troops were disembarked in the course of that evening and

Dec. 14. the following morning. At 7 A.M. they moved off in two divisions, the advance consisting of four hundred of the Hundred and First and Hundred and Second, three hundred Sikhs, and two ship's guns dragged by blue-jackets under Godwin in person, and the reserve of four hundred of the Hundred and First and two hundred Madras sepoys under Brigadier-general Steel. Marching inland Godwin manœuvred to strike upon the eastern face of the pagoda, so as to take the besieging force in rear, and, beyond a little bickering with skirmishers, encountered no opposition. His casualties were no more than a dozen killed and wounded, but, by the time that the day's work was over, the troops were utterly exhausted by the heat. However, the renewal of desultory fire by the enemy in the afternoon compelled the clearance of his defensive works on all sides, and the men could not settle down for the night until after dusk, when they took such cover as they could against the damp and the drenching dew. The force had left Rangoon, owing to the urgency of the case, in the lightest possible order. Not an officer, excepting Godwin and Steel, had a horse. The men had brought with them the least possible amount of clothing, and many, having

no greatcoats, suffered bitterly from cold, making them an easy prey to fever and dysentery. 1852. Dec.

On the morning of the 15th a force of nine to ten thousand Burmese was observed entrenching itself some four miles to northward, and Godwin, who had never yet brought his enemy fairly to action, was anxious to defeat it decisively and break it up. "But," he wrote significantly, bearing in mind the elusiveness of his foes, "I cannot state how far I can go, as the progress of all soldiers depends upon feeding them, which can never be left to accident." The truth is that the question of land-transport presented as serious difficulties in 1852 as in 1824. Dalhousie fully recognised the fact, but had been unwilling to face the enormous expense of providing land-transport except in case of absolute necessity.[1] Nor were there wanting plenty of superficial critics, who maintained that the campaign could be carried to a decisive issue with water-transport only. But an army that could not leave the Irrawaddy was as powerless as a fleet for inland operations. The enemy had only to retire three days' march from the river in full confidence that the British could not follow them further, and advance again at their leisure when the British returned to their boats. During the autumn of 1852 Dalhousie, alive to this important fact, ordered two hundred elephants to be sent from Assam and the borders of Arakan over the Aroka mountains into the valley of the Irrawaddy, and so to Prome. But these had not yet arrived, and meanwhile Godwin had to be content with eighteen buffalo-carts, which with great difficulty he had procured at Pegu.

On the 17th accordingly he marched northward at 7 A.M. with about twelve hundred men,[2] each man carrying his greatcoat and one day's cooked provisions, while the bullock-carts carried supplies for six days.

[1] Laurie, p. 314.

[2] 101st, 570; 102nd, 150; 10th B.N.I., 182; Sikhs, 330; Sappers and Miners, 30.

1852. Dec. Passing through the jungle to the north of Pegu, the force emerged into an open plain and came within sight of the enemy's entrenchments, which were in three lines, extending from the river for a mile to the eastward. Godwin manœuvred to turn their left, being their unprotected flank, but by the time that he had formed his columns of attack the Burmese were in full retreat. He followed them up for ten miles to a large village, where the men found good quarters for the night, but not a living soul, and, what was worse, not a grain of corn. On the 18th he advanced yet another ten miles to another village, where the Burmese made some show of resistance but speedily retired; and on Dec. 19. the 19th the state of his supplies compelled him to return to Pegu.

On that same day Sturt's column entered Pegu after a march of seventy-two miles, in the course of which he had found all the people not only friendly but helpful. Not an enemy of any kind was seen, though there were signs that they had but lately quitted a tract of dense jungle some five miles to south of Pegu. Sturt reported that artillery- or baggage-waggons having once entered the narrow tracks in this jungle, could not escape destruction at the hands of a resolute enemy which, if attacked, would be perfectly safe from pursuit. He added that he had found abundance of fine bullocks within fifteen miles of Rangoon; but this was of no great help to Godwin, for Rangoon, as he said, was the one place where he did not want them. Where he did want them was at his outlying posts, and particularly at Prome.

In truth it was evident that these outlying posts, if the garrisons had no power, from want of transport, to take the offensive, were sources of weakness and almost hostages given to fortune. They furnished vulnerable points against which the Burmese, whether regular troops or gangs of banditti—dacoits, to use the familiar native name—could wage an incessant

petty war of attrition by harassing picquets, assassinating sentries, cutting off unwary individuals who ventured out too far from the lines of defence, and in particular by constant night-attacks which meant wearing exertion to officers and men. At Prome these tactics seem to have been followed by the enemy throughout November, and they culminated in a serious attack, which was repulsed at every point, at the end of the month. Fatigue, of course, signified sickness, and privation of fresh provisions, milk and vegetables yet more sickness. The moral effect of passive endurance, forced upon the men, was perhaps more damaging to their health than even fatigue and privation. Then again communication by water could not be called safe. The steamers could take care of themselves, though always subject to "sniping" fire from the banks; but smaller craft, if they ran aground or were caught in some channel, which the Burmese had staked, could be and were occasionally overpowered by the enemy. Altogether, the situation was by no means quite comfortable; and Godwin, while relieving Pegu and reinforcing the garrison, was anxious, throughout the whole of his operations there, to hasten to Prome. It was his own fault that he had been distracted to Pegu at all, for he had certainly left too small a garrison there in the first instance; and it was significant that, immediately upon his return from Pegu on the 20th of December, the Burmese reassembled and invested the place once more. Without land-transport it was difficult to see how he could strike any effective blow against the Burmese forces in the field. 1852. Dec.

A new series of operations was forced upon him by a proclamation of the Governor-general on the 20th of December, annexing the province of Pegu. This document announced that all Burmese troops should be driven out; and accordingly a column was organised under General Steel to march through the province from end to end. Its strength amounted to

1852. rather over two thousand men,[1] six hundred of them Europeans, with four heavy howitzers, four light mortars and rocket-tubes. The Commissary at Moulmein had managed to collect in the Tennasserim provinces one hundred and twenty elephants, three hundred bullock-carts with teams, and some hundreds of spare bullocks, so that Steel was able to start with one month's supplies. Since his destination, Toungoo, lay one hundred and eighty miles as the crow flies from his point of departure, Martaban, and the navigation of the Sittang River was uncertain, Steel directed another month's provisions to be sent up by water to Pegu. Having taken this precaution, set
1853. out from Martaban on the 14th of January 1853.
Jan. His march being practically bloodless and unopposed, it need be mentioned only that he reached Shwegyin
Feb. on the 12th of February, where he found a certain quantity of supplies, which had been brought up the Sittang in boats, awaiting him in the river. He received also intelligence that the provisions which he expected from Pegu were being sent forward to Myitkyo. The headman at Shwegyin, being friendly, furnished sixty boats; and Steel, embarking ten days' supplies upon these, and loading as much again upon elephants and bullocks, started on the 15th with nine hundred men for Toungoo, which was surrendered to him upon his approach on the 22nd. There he halted to await orders from Godwin, after a march of two hundred and forty miles through unknown forest. Though recent traces of the Burmese army were noted at many stages, he had actually seen no enemy.

Godwin, meanwhile, repaired on the 29th of December to Prome, which he reached on the 5th of
Jan. January. He was met by the news that the Burmese forces had vanished. There had been a revolution at Ava, and all armed men were hastening thither to

[1] 1 co. Sappers and Miners, 1 co. (European) Madras Artillery; 101st, 450; 102nd, 150; 4 cos. 10th B.N.I.; 4 cos. 5th M.N.I.; 3 Rifle cos. M.N.I.; detachment of Irregular horse.

share in the spoil. Accordingly on the 23rd he proceeded up the river to Meaday, while Sir John Cheape led a column to the same place by land. A new stockade of most elaborate construction was there found—empty—and on the 27th there arrived a deputation from the Prince who had displaced the old King of Ava, with a message which pointed to negotiations for peace. Godwin returned a peremptory answer, and, leaving a garrison of five hundred men at Meaday, returned to Prome. The rest of the land column, under Sir John Cheape, likewise returned to Prome on the 3rd of February, where Cheape found that there was more serious work before him. 1853. Jan.

The national army of the Burmese might find full employment for itself in supporting or opposing those who had rebelled against the old King of Ava; but the banditti, or dacoits, were working actively upon their own account, and the most formidable of these were a gang which worked under the leadership of one Myat-Toon of Donubyu. Ever since the opening of the war this chief had been a thorn in the British side. He was always on the watch for the British boats as they passed up and down the river, and, pouncing upon any that were careless or unwary, had captured several. With a force reckoned at seven thousand men he laid waste the country of the people friendly to the British, and towards the end of 1852 had carried his ravages to within thirty miles of Rangoon, finally settling down at Donubyu. On the 17th of January 1853, a flotilla of armed boats attempted to penetrate up a narrow creek leading to Myat-Toon's stronghold and was driven back with some little loss. It was then determined to send a stronger force against him, consisting of about two hundred and fifty seamen and marines and three hundred of the Sixty-seventh Bengal Native Infantry, with two light guns, the whole under command of Captain Loch of the Queen's ship *Winchester*. Leaving Rangoon in the first days of February, Loch brought Feb.

1853. his flotilla up to Donubyu, and, finding all the creeks
Feb. running inland to be staked and impassable by boats, decided to disembark and march upon Myat-Toon's stronghold by land. Accordingly he struggled forward for several miles through the jungle, and when within two miles of the hostile stockade was turned by his guide into a narrow path. Following this with his whole force he found himself checked by a deep, wet ravine, and came to an abrupt halt. He could not go on; he could not, owing to the dense jungle, turn to right nor left; and before he could turn back he found himself under a very heavy fire from the front and both flanks. Loch and two more officers were mortally wounded almost at once, whereupon the senior military officer, Major Minchin of the Sixty-seventh Bengal Native Infantry, took command, formed a rear-guard, and brought the remnant back after an exhausting retreat to Donubyu. The mishap was due entirely to the neglect of all military precautions, as was to be expected when the movement was not under the direction of a military man. No attempt was made to reconnoitre the path before the entire column was committed to it; and it is evident that the whole of the Europeans were in front, for they lost fifty-nine killed and wounded, whereas the sepoys in rear lost but twenty-three. Had the enemy been really formidable they would have destroyed the party to a man, for they did their best to cut off its retreat; and on the whole, bad and inexcusable as the whole affair was, it might have been a great deal worse. All of the wounded were brought off, though the two guns were spiked and abandoned; and Godwin pointed the moral by issuing an order that in all expeditions by land the senior military officer should take command of all naval officers irrespective of rank.

It was to avenge this misfortune that Cheape was summoned from Prome, taking with him about seven hundred and fifty picked men, more than half of them of the Eighteenth and Fifty-first, with two guns and

some rocket-tubes. His force was landed at Henzada, 1853.
some thirty miles north of Donubyu, where bullock-transport was obtainable; and, his information being that Myat-Toon's stockade was three or four days' march distant, he started on the 22nd, with eight Feb. 22.
days' supplies, designing after his work was done to re-embark at Donubyu. For four days he marched through the jungle, only twice seeing any sign of an enemy; and then, believing himself to be still far from his destination and having no intelligence except that the way thither was barred by an unfordable creek, he turned back to the river. He reached it at Zooloom on the 28th, and, moving part of his force by land and part by water, arrived at Donubyu on the 3rd of March. March.
Here he was lucky enough to surprise a Burmese picquet, and to take three prisoners whom he impressed as his guides. On the 6th reinforcements of five hundred men, one-fourth of them recruits of the Eightieth, joined him, also two mortars and a large supply of provisions. After leaving his sick and a small garrison at Donubyu, he was able to start again on the 7th with about a thousand infantry, half European, half sepoys, a hundred sappers and gunners, three rocket-tubes, four light pieces and a troop of irregular horse. Being assured that Myat-Toon's stronghold was within three marches, he took with him a week's supplies.

The way lay due west, and after traversing seven miles Cheape halted for the night, having arrived at the bank of a creek one hundred yards broad. Throughout the hours of darkness the Burmese kept up a dropping fire on the bivouac which did little damage; and the whole of the 8th was occupied in taking the column across the creek in two rafts, which Cheape had brought with him. On the 9th the march was resumed. No sign of any human being was encountered; and, the guide being mistrusted, another guide was chosen, who, after a long circuit under a blazing sun, brought the troops back to their original

1853. March. starting-place. Cheape pushed forward a small advanced party for a mile; which surprised a party of the enemy; and the rest of the column, following, bivouacked on the bank of a creek fifty yards wide. The crossing of this obstacle occupied the whole of the 10th; and on the 11th, after two miles of march, the column entered dense forest. There was some firing by the enemy both in front and rear, causing eight or ten casualties, and the enemy had felled trees across the track, which caused much delay. Late in the afternoon the force crossed a piece of water, and then the advanced party discovered that the guide had once again been at fault. Every soul was so utterly wearied out that Cheape was fain to halt where he stood. Darkness fell long before the last of the bullock-carts came up; and the situation was so perilous that Cheape forbade the lighting of any fire. The night, however, passed off without disturbance from the Burmese, though a far more formidable enemy, cholera, made its appearance; and on the 12th the column retraced its steps to the ground which it had occupied on the 10th. The troops were thoroughly depressed; Myat-Toon seemed to be undiscoverable; and there had been thirteen deaths from cholera. As provisions were running short, Cheape thought it prudent to put the men on half-rations, and sent back his bullock-carts with an escort of three hundred men to fetch further supplies from Donubyu. Meanwhile he could only remain halted, with cholera striking men down right and left, and a few Burmese bullets flying into camp every night.

On the 16th the convoy returned, and on the afternoon of the 17th an advanced party set out again on the old road, carried a breast-work which the Burmese had thrown up across it, and sent back a prisoner who gave useful information. On the 18th, therefore, Cheape advanced at daybreak, leaving his sick, wounded and surplus provisions under a small

guard, encountered another breast-work late in the afternoon, carried it with small loss, and halted for the night on the bank of a creek. Pushing on early on the 19th he came upon another muddy creek with a breast-work beyond it, and knew that he had found his quarry at last. Bringing up his guns to engage the enemy in front, he decided to pass round the head of the water-course and attack the breast-work by a path leading into it on the enemy's right. The Eightieth and Sikhs led the attack, but were met by so heavy a fire that they were repulsed. They then tried to find a way round the right flank of the breast-work, but were stopped by dense jungle and abatis. The Eighteenth then came up, but were likewise beaten back with severe loss. The enemy's fire of grape and musketry was, in fact, so heavy that unless it could be quelled, it seemed impossible for any storming-party to reach the breast-work alive, for the path was not only swept from end to end from the front, but also enfiladed by a flanking work. Cheape therefore brought up a twenty-four-pounder howitzer, and, pushing out skirmishers to cover its advance, opened fire from it with canister at a range of twenty-five yards. The gun's crew naturally suffered for their temerity, but the Burmese suffered more. The remnant of the defeated parties was rallied, with Ensign Garnet Wolseley of the Eightieth at their head; and fresh men were brought up from the Fifty-first and from the Sixty-seventh Bengal sepoys. The whole then advanced with a rush, carried the breast-work, and, falling to work with the bayonet, scattered the defenders with very heavy loss. Myat-Toon escaped; and, though Cheape at once despatched troops to his village, neither there nor on the road thither was a living soul to be seen. All of the chief's resources were within his stockade, and it was reckoned that he had four thousand men—about four men to every yard of its length—to defend it. But all were dispersed, and his power was broken. By the 24th

1853. March.

1853. March. Cheape and his column had returned to Donubyu with their work done.

Rarely have British troops been more severely tried than in this little campaign of twenty-four days; and it says much for Cheape's tenacity that he was able to hold them together through all their trials, disappointments, hardships and privations. Forest-fighting against an invisible human enemy under a tropical sun is hard enough, but, when the living foe has cholera for his ally, the combination is very formidable. The casualties in the actual assault numbered ninety-five, among the hurt being young Garnet Wolseley, the future Field-Marshal and Commander-in-chief, who, having his thigh ripped up by a jingal-ball, was crippled for life as a horseman, though he walked without a limp. The killed and wounded in the whole expedition amounted to one hundred and thirty, and the deaths from cholera exceeded one hundred, altogether an appreciable loss in a party of no more than eleven hundred and fifty of all ranks.

This was the last serious action of the war. After some negotiation the Burmese accepted the cession of the province of Pegu as the price of peace, and the cessation of hostilities was finally proclaimed on the 30th of June 1853. There was some little trouble in that province owing to an abortive insurrection in April 1853, and again in the opening months of 1854, but order was restored with little difficulty or loss, and the details are no better worth recounting than those of a hundred petty affairs of police in the Indian Peninsula. Nothing therefore remains to be added to the narrative of the second Burmese war.

It is noteworthy that the press both in England and in India was very impatient in its criticism of Godwin for the slowness and prudence of his operations; and as he was not a young, though he was an exceedingly active man, he was set down as too old for his work. It should seem that shallow observers, dazzled by the rapid development of steam-vessels,

and by the dash and enterprise manifested by naval officers in the handling of the same, deemed it a simple matter for a flotilla to ascend the river to Ava with—or even without—a sufficient body of troops, and to dictate terms to the Burmese court there and then. The fallacy is an old one, and it may not be amiss to expose it even for the hundredth time. Water-craft, whether armed cutters or battle-ships, cannot work ashore. Again and again the navy has tried to do work of both services, but has invariably failed. Duckworth sailed up the Dardanelles in 1807 with little difficulty, but was glad, when he sailed down again, to escape with considerable loss; and, if the fleet had succeeded in forcing the passage of the same strait in 1915, it might have undergone the same experience. Now a river is, from a naval point of view, nothing more than a long strait. It may not be very difficult to go up, but it is impossible to keep the passage open for the downward journey without a chain of military posts on the banks. The garrisons for such posts devour a military force very rapidly; they are themselves a source of anxiety, being always open to attack by a sudden concentration of the enemy; and, unless furnished with some proportion of land-transport, they cannot sally out and break up the enemy's bands in detail before concentration is accomplished. Moreover, in such a climate as that of Burma, where thirty to forty per cent of the men may be in hospital, they may at times be almost powerless even to hold their own. In any case they must be supplied with food and ammunition, and possibly also with forage, which throws a great strain upon the resources of the navy. Where, as on the Irrawaddy, hardly a mile of the banks could be considered to be permanently free of an enemy, every convoy practically demands protection. Boats may creep up stream safely by daylight but must make fast to the bank for the night, and then comes the enemy's opportunity, as was shown, not unfrequently, in the course of this 1853.

1853. war. The loss of a boat or two from time to time may seem to be of no great moment, but if the craft happen to contain ammunition to supply a post which is hard beset, then it may be a very serious matter.

Moreover, the navy has its own technical difficulties. Machinery needs constant attention and repair, and the boilers of 1852 were not so trustworthy as those of the present day. A breakdown of engines may mean days of delay, or even, at the worst, the loss of a vessel and a temporary paralysis of movement by water. Then there are the mischances which may, in spite of all skill and forethought, arise from shifting shoals, changing channels and falling waters; and the Burmese, being alert to multiply these mischances by art, and endless trouble by the staking of creeks and similar devices. A very little thought will show that headlong dashes of flotillas up the river would have been simply madness.

Dalhousie seems to have trusted mainly to the naval blockade to bring the court of Ava to reason, and he was not wrong, though it was obvious that the process would take time. Godwin's original force was not really strong enough to do much more than hold Rangoon and Bassein for the safety of the blockading vessels; and he cannot be blamed if he declined, until reinforced, to advance to Prome and Pegu. His enemies were everywhere, for though large bodies of the people were friendly, these were always subject to intimidation by dacoits, and could not, therefore, be counted upon. If he wished to make even Rangoon and Bassein absolutely safe, he must clear the country for some distance to northward upon all branches of the river; and this he could not do without land-transport. We have seen how Dalhousie, after some hesitation, decided at last to furnish him with this transport from Assam and Arakan; and the march of the three hundred elephants to Prome was an incident which might furnish material for a romantic chapter. The Burmese laid their plans

to intercept them by erecting a stockade near the entrance to the Aeng pass, but on the night of the 6th of January 1853, this stockade was surprised and captured by the Arakan local levies under the British officers, and thus the way was made safe. The elephants finally crossed into the valley of the Irrawaddy by a pass a hundred miles south of Aeng, and the first of them came into Prome in the earliest days of March. It is significant that in those very days Cheape was groping his way through the jungle a hundred miles below Prome, in order to make secure the line of communication by the river. 1853.

Dalhousie's preparations, to his great relief, were rendered superfluous by the revolution at Ava, which no doubt was directly attributable to the blockade. Any further movement northward became unnecessary when the Burmese troops were already streaming thither of their own motion; and this was fortunate, for Prome must have been the advanced base, and the place was hideously unhealthy. Even as things were, scores of British soldiers found their graves at Prome. Speaking generally, the hardships of the campaign were not comparable to those endured by the troops in the first Burmese war. The men were well fed and, according to the standards of the time, well looked after; but the exhaustion caused by any military operation in tropical jungle and swamp was inevitably excessive, and fever, dysentery and cholera claimed hundreds of victims. Such, however, is the work which the British expect as a matter of course from the British soldier; and, in accordance with the precedent set by Ellenborough in 1841, and followed by his successors after the Sikh wars, it was rewarded by a medal—that medal which, among a vast number of clasps issued during the long reign of Queen Victoria for service in the Indian Empire, includes one with the name of Pegu.

CHAPTER XXXIX

Throughout the long struggle for the consolidation of the Indian Empire there had been continuous unrest and trouble in South Africa. The reversal of D'Urban's policy by Glenelg, the thrusting back of the eastern frontier to the Fish river, and the futile expectation that savage tribes would respect treaties which they had not the power, even if they had the will, to enforce, brought forth at once their inevitable fruit. The Kaffirs continued to make raids across the border to carry away cattle and to murder settlers, with the greater confidence since they felt assured of impunity; and the Dutch settlers, justly impatient of a government which denied protection to its subjects, streamed away by thousands to the north and north-east, to seek new homes where no Colonial Office could reach them. Some moved north and occupied, with little trouble, the country between the Caledon and Vaal rivers. Others betook themselves to Natal, where a handful of Englishmen had already made a small settlement and
1835. in 1835 had laid out a town which they called Durban, in honour of the Governor of Cape Colony. These English petitioned the government in England to acknowledge them as a British colony, but Glenelg absolutely refused on the ground that further extension of British territory in South Africa was, upon principle, disapproved by the authorities in Downing Street. Glenelg's attitude was easily intelligible. Enlargement of the Empire carried with it the need for a greater force of Imperial police, or in other words augmentation of the British Army.

The arrival of some hundreds of Boer settlers in Natal, all of them bitterly hostile to British rule, inevitably signified trouble in the future. Moreover, these Boers were early steeled by adversity. In the territory which they occupied they were obliged inevitably to accept the Zulus for neighbours, and, being deceived by the friendly professions of the Zulu chief, Dingaan, they were so unwary as to suffer two distinct parties, numbering nearly three hundred souls in all, to be surprised and massacred. Quite undismayed, the survivors sallied out to take revenge. The handful of English, as a distinct band, acted with them. Both were at the first outmanœuvred by Zulu tactics, but both extricated themselves by desperate fighting; and then the Boers, having learned their lesson, advanced with greater caution, and on the 16th of December 1838 1838. inflicted on Dingaan so crushing a defeat as to make their name a terror to him for ever. In January 1840, in alliance with certain disaffected tribes which had been forcibly incorporated with the Zulus, the Boers advanced once more. Dingaan's army was destroyed; his successor, Panda, accepted vassalage to the victors; and the Boer emigrants proclaimed the country bounded by the Tugela on the north, the Umzimvubu on the south, the Drakensberg on the west, and the ocean on the east to be their own free republic.

While these events were going forward the Governor at Capetown was Sir George Napier, who had arrived there to replace D'Urban in January 1838. A brother of Charles and William he, even as they, had seen much service in the Peninsular War, but, though a good soldier, he was not comparable with D'Urban as an administrator. The Napiers, upon occasion, could all discourse eloquently of the principles of humanity, and Charles came out filled with the fair doctrines of Glenelg, and resolute to govern his conduct accordingly. A very few months on the eastern frontier sufficed to undeceive him. It seemed likely that another war would break out immediately. Raids

1838. and robberies by the Xosas were frequent; friendly tribes were begging for protection against their more powerful neighbours; the military line on the frontier, imposed very much by Glenelg's retraction of the frontier to the Fish river, was as bad as it could be; and there were not nearly troops enough to secure it. In July, Napier was fain to ask Glenelg that he might station three regiments of the line, half a company of artillery, and the Cape Mounted Rifles upon the border, "to prevent the ruinous stock-stealing and provide against a sudden rush of the Kaffirs into the Colony." [1] Thus the very policy which was to have relieved the pressure upon the overworked British Army resulted within six months in a cry for reinforcements.

Meanwhile there was the pressing question how the emigration of the Dutch was to be stemmed and how the emigrants could be induced to return; for it was, after all, the Boers who had been the main strength of Harry Smith's force in the last war. It was, moreover, rather more than any English governor could endure to see another white race set up an independent republic in Natal, with a port which would afford communication with the outside world. On
Nov. his own responsibility, therefore, Napier, in November 1838, sent a company of the Seventy-second and a few gunners to Port Natal, with the idea of cutting off all supplies of arms and ammunition, and so compelling the emigrants either to retreat or to perish. The commanding officer annexed the ground surrounding the harbour within two miles of high-water mark, declared martial law therein, seized all the ammunition, to whomsoever belonging, in the place, and fortified himself in a defensive position. But he could do no more. Lord Normanby, Glenelg's successor at the Colonial Office, approved of the temporary occupation of the port, but reiterated the government's resolution against any extension of territory in South Africa.

[1] Theal, iv. 169.

Indeed, the Boers, upon the mere rumour that a party 1838.
of English immigrants was expected to land in Natal, declared that they would oppose their disembarkation by force of arms, and harass them with guerilla warfare if they landed under protection of a superior force. After the troops had remained in Natal for a year, the Seventy-second was recalled to England, and in December 1839 the company was necessarily with- 1839.
drawn to sail home with the regiment. No fresh troops were sent to replace it. The confiscated ammunition was restored; the flag was hauled down; and the Imperial government to all appearance tacitly renounced all claim to the allegiance of the Boer republic in Natal.

Meanwhile the Colonial Minister, responding to Napier's appeal, had sent out the Twenty-fifth and a wing of the Ninety-first foot; and the governor was thus enabled to distribute eighteen hundred men along the frontier-posts, between which the Cape Mounted Rifles—two hundred men strong—patrolled until they could patrol no more. Some of the British soldiers were mounted to help them in this arduous duty, but all was to no purpose. So long as the Kaffirs could conceal themselves in the thickets which filled the valley of the Fish river, it was hopeless to prevent cattle-stealing. Napier, completely converted to the views of D'Urban and Harry Smith by fifteen months of bitter experience, pressed upon the Colonial Office the obligation of Parliament to make good the losses of the despoiled settlers; since the damage had been incurred through a system which was none of their own choosing but had been imposed upon them by Downing Street. A proposition so outrageous to the official mind was of course rejected. Napier, however, without waiting for the answer, in April 1839 sent two columns April.
of troops against two chiefs of the marauding tribes, seized the whole of their herds and distributed them as compensation to those who had been robbed. To one column the Kaffirs offered some resistance which

1839. compelled the troops to fire. Only one Kaffir was killed, yet the result was salutary, and for a time at any rate in the north and north-east there was a cessation of forays.

1840. But early in 1840 Sandile, the legal heir of the great chief, Gaika, came of age; and the occasion was celebrated with great feasting of the tribes in the Amatola mountains. Stolen meat is sweet; and the fattest oxen of the white settlers were driven off to furnish it. Napier was at his wits' end; and in September he wrote to the Colonial Office that, unless Glenelg's entire policy were reversed, the enraged farmers would certainly take the law into their own hands, invade the Kaffir country and recover their cattle by force. Meanwhile the Seventy-second had sailed home; and Napier, being left with only three battalions and a half, all of them weak, was obliged to reduce the garrison of the Cape Peninsula to a single battalion only. But the Colonial Office did at least permit some modification of the rules, which had bound the farmers to submit without redress to the robbery of their stock by the Kaffirs; and thus for a space the evil day was postponed.

1841. In September 1841, upon the accession of Sir Robert Peel's administration to power, Lord Stanley took over the Colonial Office, and it was hoped at the Cape that the change of men might mean a change of

1842. policy. In 1842 the first battalion of the Ninety-first was made up to its full strength by the arrival of three of its companies from St. Helena, and the second, or reserve battalion, of the same regiment also arrived to relieve the Twenty-fifth. Cattle-raiding had begun

1843. again, and in February 1843, Napier detained the reserve battalion of the Twelfth, which had put in to Table Bay on its way to Mauritius, in order to liberate one of his own battalions for service on the frontier. This enabled him in June to march a small force from Grahamstown against a refractory tribe, trusting to Sandile and the Gaikas, with whom the movement

had been concerted, to cut off the retreat of the offenders. 1843.
The movement was a failure, for the Gaikas showed pretty plainly that they would protect rather than attack their peccant countrymen, and that any further advance of the troops would be the signal for war. Such chiefs as were faithful and friendly now begged leave to withdraw themselves and their people before the storm should burst. They showed wisdom and prudence herein; but the time was not yet come.

Meanwhile fresh trouble had broken out in Natal. The Dutch settlers established an advanced form of republican government, but they were so ignorant and so quarrelsome that they failed altogether to fulfil the most elementary duties of administration. Moreover, they interfered in the quarrels of native tribes, which speedily brought them into collision with the British authorities at Capetown. In January 1841 a 1841.
chief on the southern border of Natal, who had, with or without reason, been attacked by the Boers, appealed to Napier for protection. Napier, justly dreading the pressure of dispossessed tribes upon his eastern frontier, where there was already mischief enough, ordered two companies of the Twenty-seventh to march to the chief's assistance. Then in December came orders from England that the independence of the Dutch in Natal was not to be recognised and that the port was to be reoccupied. The troops sent to the help of the Kaffir chief were, therefore, reinforced by another hundred men, and marching overland they reached Port Natal on the 4th of May 1842. On the 17th, 1842.
Pretorius, the head of the republic, ordered them to May.
leave his territory. Captain Smith, who was in command, refused; and, as Pretorius had collected two hundred and fifty armed burghers to expel him by force, Smith, on the night of the 23rd, moved out with about half that number to attack them. The affair was mismanaged; and Smith, having lost two guns and forty-nine killed and wounded, was forced to retreat and entrench himself for resistance to the last. The

1842. burghers, now strengthened to six hundred men, besieged him, and for twenty-six days pressed him hard; but Smith had managed to send news of his situation to Capetown, and on the 24th and 25th of June. June reinforcements arrived, some of them in the Queen's frigate, *Southampton*.[1] After violent dissensions the burghers agreed to restore all their prisoners and captured property, and, after an interval of months and yet more stormy scenes, the British sovereignty of Natal was finally accepted in August 1843. 1843. Therewith the irreconcilable party among the Dutch again abandoned their homes and marched across the Drakensberg, to seek for the second time the independence for which they craved. Barely five hundred families were left in Natal, so that the pacific section must have been small. Such stubbornness of will would compel greater admiration if these Dutch settlers had not proved themselves so cantankerous as to be incapable even of self-government upon their own approved principles.

All these matters added to Napier's anxieties and apprehensions of a Kaffir rising, for they made constant demands upon his weak and slender garrison. However, after many vicissitudes the strength of the regular troops had again been raised to four battalions, and to these had been added a regiment of cavalry, the Seventh Dragoon Guards, so that the force upon the frontier was more formidable than it had been. In Dec. December 1843, Napier, having resigned the government, sailed home, and was succeeded by another veteran of the Peninsula and Waterloo, Sir Peregrine Maitland.

As regards uprightness and experience of civil business, the choice of Maitland was not a bad one; but he was in his sixty-eighth year, which is too old for a man who may be called upon at any moment to ride hundreds of miles to a distant country, and there direct operations of a peculiarly difficult kind over a

[1] One hundred of the 27th, a wing of the 25th.

wide front. Napier, just before his departure, had recommended that salaries should be paid to the Kaffir chiefs on the border to purchase immunity from plunder, analogous to the blackmail formerly extorted by the Khyberris from the rulers of Kabul, for safe transit through the Khyber pass. Lord Stanley did not disapprove the idea, though he expected little from it; but, while admitting that D'Urban's system might have been the right one, he forbade reversion to it since such a course would involve war. With this reservation he granted Maitland considerable latitude, only warning him that there were limits to the military resources of England. In substance, therefore, the Conservative Administration, equally with Lord Melbourne's, declined to face the facts. 1843.

Upon proceeding to the frontier, Maitland passed the same criticism as had Napier and every military man who knew his business, that the line of defence on the right bank of the Fish river was hopelessly defective. He saw a certain number of chiefs and concluded fresh treaties with them, promising them from fifty to a hundred pounds annually, by way of blackmail; all of which the farmers on the border regarded, quite correctly, as waste of time, paper and money. A more practical measure was the erection of a small fort, named Post Victoria, on the watershed between the Keiskama and Tyumie rivers and within a few miles of Sandile's kraal. This effectually prevented raids for a time in that quarter, and it was presently supplemented by another post, later called Fort Hare, a few miles further to the north at Block Drift, which was constructed upon ground rented from Sandile. This chief, weak and irresolute, was friendly or unfriendly according to the pressure put upon him by his young warriors, who were eager for cattle-raids; and he raised such difficulties, despite of the agreement which he had made, over the erection of the fort that a rupture was only averted by hasty reinforcement of the frontier posts. The Kaffir tribes 1844.

1846. were in fact in so highly inflammable a state that the first chance spark must cause an explosion, and on
Mar. 16. the 16th of March 1846, that spark was kindled.

Upon that day a Kaffir was detected in the act of stealing an ox at Fort Beaufort, and was sent down with three other offenders under escort of four armed Hottentots to be tried at Grahamstown. Tola, the chief of his tribe, at once went to Fort Beaufort to demand his release, and, being refused, gave orders that he should be rescued. A party of forty Kaffirs accordingly waylaid and dispersed the escort, killed a Hottentot to whom the culprit was manacled, and carried their friend off in triumph. The outrage was committed upon British territory and the murdered Hottentot was a British subject. Colonel Hare, the Lieutenant-governor on the frontier, therefore required from Tola the delivery both of the rescued man and of the murderer, and, being refused, made the same demand of Sandile, with whom the two men were known to be. Sandile likewise defied him; and Hare, warning the neighbouring burghers to be on their guard, prepared for a forcible occupation of Sandile's kraal. Maitland, upon hearing what had passed, at once sent up every man that he could spare from Capetown—a bare eighty of the Twenty-seventh foot and two guns—and embarked himself on the 1st of
April. April for the scene of action. The force actually collected on the frontier amounted to about a thousand rank and file of the Twenty-seventh and Ninety-first, about three hundred and fifty of the Seventh Dragoon Guards, a few gunners and sappers, and four hundred of the Cape Mounted Rifles, altogether about two thousand regular troops of all ranks, to which were added fifteen hundred Hottentot irregulars. To enable most of these to take the offensive, Hare on the 31st of March called the burghers of the eastern districts to arms to protect the Colony from invasion.

Had Harry Smith been on the spot he would have collected by stealth a choice body of mounted men, and

swooped upon Sandile within thirty-six hours. Hare solemnly collected one hundred and twenty-five waggons at Post Victoria, which took a fortnight, and then ordered three columns, made up of the Seventh Dragoon Guards, the Cape Mounted Rifles, four companies of the Ninety-first, and Hottentot levies, to converge from different points upon Sandile's kraal at Burnshill. They duly reached it on the 15th of April and of course found it deserted, the tribes having retired to the forest of Amatola. A camp was formed at Burnshill and left to the protection of the Seventh Dragoon Guards; and on the 16th, Colonel Somerset, who was in command, moved off with the rest of the troops to the pursuit of Sandile. He was no sooner well ingulfed in the wooded defiles than the Kaffirs closed round him in great numbers, but were beaten off after sharp skirmishing. At daybreak of the 17th, Somerset ordered the troops and transport at Burnshill to join him, and in the course of the forenoon they set out. The waggons, each with its team of fourteen oxen, proceeding necessary in single file, extended for a length of three miles; and for a train so long the troops were too few to furnish flank guards. While passing through a narrow gorge one of the central waggons stuck fast, bringing all behind it to a halt; and in an instant the Gaikas rushed down to the spot, cut the oxen loose and drove them off. The dragoons in front continued to advance; those in rear were unable even to approach the scene of action; and though the rearmost waggons, containing ammunition, were turned about and taken back to Burnshill, no fewer than sixty-one, besides over eight hundred oxen, fell into the hands of the Kaffirs. In addition, fifteen officers and men of the regular troops were killed and fourteen more severely wounded; and Somerset, feeling sure that this success would urge the tribes headlong to the plunder of the Colony, retreated at once to Block Drift. 1846. April.

As he had expected, the Kaffirs crossed the frontier

1846. at once to burn cornstacks and drive off cattle; but the
April. farmers had grouped themselves together into defensible camps, nearly all of which were attacked though not one was overwhelmed. The casualties among them did not exceed a dozen, but the loss of property was very great; and the government had now to provide not only for a war but for the subsistence of several thousand destitute souls. As it happened, all circumstances conspired to multiply difficulties. The country was burned up by a prolonged drought, so that transport, for want of forage, was exceedingly difficult. The frontier-posts had no depôts of supplies either for men or for horses, and were simply encumbrances. To use Maitland's picturesque phrase, they served no better to prevent an invasion than the piers of a bridge to arrest a flood. It should seem, too, that in some cases the British officers showed less enterprise than they ought to have shown. As to the tribes which had sworn to be friendly, the Fingos alone, besides one or two petty clans, sided with the Europeans, while the rest joined in the joyful work of pillage. The harvest of Glenelg's folly was ripe and full.

On the 16th of April, Maitland reached Post Victoria, and on the 22nd he proclaimed martial law and called out the entire force of the burghers, placing Stockenstrom, who had recanted his past errors, in command of it. But thousands of the men who had worked so loyally with Harry Smith were now out of reach in Natal or beyond the Orange river. Nevertheless, Stockenstrom in the north, and Somerset in the south, followed up the invaders, and by the end of
May. May had succeeded in hunting nearly all of them back to their own country. Meanwhile, beyond the border, Maitland had evacuated Post Victoria and encamped a strong force at Block Drift; but little effective work could be done until supplies and stores could be brought up and stored at the front; and even this business did not go forward without mishap. On the 18th of May a convoy of forty-three waggons started from

Grahamstown for Fort Peddie with an escort of forty burghers and eighty soldiers of the Ninety-first. It was attacked in the bush about three miles beyond Trompetter's Drift, the oxen of the leading waggons being shot down by concealed Kaffirs, and was abandoned almost without an effort. Heartened by this easy success the Kaffirs assembled in great force on the 28th to attack Fort Peddie itself, but finding the garrison on the alert gave up the attempt after losing twenty or thirty men. The next convoy to Fort Peddie, which numbered eighty-two waggons, had for escort some twelve hundred men, regular and irregular, and, though attacked in the bush beyond the Fish river, was safely brought in. To distract the enemy from any attempt upon the empty waggons on their return, Somerset, on the 7th of June, led a party of about one hundred and fifty men of the Cape Mounted Rifles and Seventh Dragoon Guards and as many mounted burghers and volunteers, with some native levies, to a raid upon a neighbouring chief's kraal, and was fortunate enough on his way back to come upon a body of five or six hundred Kaffirs in the open. Joyfully taking advantage of so rare an opportunity, the horsemen galloped straight into the middle of them, killed over two hundred on the spot and hunted as many more badly wounded into the jungle. Thus at last the Kaffirs were taught once again to respect the European.

1846. May. June.

By the end of June there was assembled on the frontier a larger force than had ever taken the field. The British troops numbered nearly twenty-six hundred,[1] including the Ninetieth, which had put into

[1]

7th D.G.	325	all ranks.
R.A.	114	„
R.E.	155	„
27th	416	„
1/45th	151	„
90th	439	„
91st	983	„
Cape Mounted Rifles	624	„
	3207	

1846. Table Bay, bound from England for Colombo, and had been detained by Maitland. These, added to the Cape Mounted Rifles, made up a total of some thirty-two hundred regular troops of all ranks. In addition there were over five hundred burghers on the spot, nearly five thousand native levies of various descriptions with European officers, and four thousand more burghers in reserve. In all there were about fourteen thousand combatants to be fed, besides some hundreds of waggon-drivers and eight thousand destitute settlers; and, in the dearth of transport, the problem of supplies became almost insoluble. Maitland met it by opening a port at Waterloo Bay near the mouth of the Fish river and within twenty-two miles of Fort Peddie; and at Waterloo Bay he fixed his head-quarters. He organised his force in two divisions, the left under Hare, with its head-quarters at Block Drift, the right under Somerset, at Waterloo Bay.

The first operation was designed to envelop the Kaffirs in the Amatola range, for which purpose Somerset advanced to Fort Beresford on the Buffalo river, and from that centre spread his troops out to cut off all retreat to the eastward, while Hare, moving from Block Drift, was to drive the enemy into Somerset's arms. The two columns began their movement on the 29th
July 29. of July and accomplished nothing, the Kaffirs never showing themselves in force and slipping away easily between the two columns. The casualties were trifling, not exceeding seventeen killed and wounded, but the loss of horses owing to want of forage was very serious. Abandoning such ambitious designs, Maitland sent two strong columns of burghers against the chief Kreli, the son of Hintsa, to east of the Kei, and another of native levies against Mapasa, a chief whose territory lay to west of Kreli's. Nothing but worthless promises were obtained from Kreli, but some ten thousand cattle were recovered from Mapasa; and therewith operations came to an end. It was simply impossible to feed any large force of men or of horses,

and on the 16th of September, Maitland was fain to dismiss the burghers to their homes. 1846. Sept. 16.

Meanwhile reinforcements had been steadily pouring in. Two battalions, the second of the Forty-fifth and the Seventy-third, which were intended to relieve as many in Cape Colony, arrived in July and August, together with drafts for the regiments on the spot. In October and November the first battalion of the Rifle Brigade and the Sixth Foot followed. One and all were miserably weak, little exceeding on an average five hundred of all ranks, so that the whole numbered but twenty-four hundred men; but they were not the less welcome. In September the drought broke up, and the growth of fresh grass enabled a system of land transport to be organised; but by this time some of the Kaffirs had become anxious for peace. They had driven their stolen cattle far to eastward, out of reach; they had no hope of stealing more; and they wished to sow their crops. Chief after chief offered submission, and the Xosas, when troops moved against them in the hope of recovering cattle, simply sat down and looked at them. It was out of the question to fire at these passive warriors; it was impossible to take them all prisoners; and the troops were helpless. Agreements were made with many chiefs, which delivered the settlers from present annoyance but provided no security for the future; and by December the only Kaffirs that remained openly hostile were the Gunukwebes under Pato, who was known to be somewhere between the lower Gonubie and the Kei, and Kreli. Maitland resolved to deal decisively with both, and so, if possible, to bring the war to an end.

Accordingly, on the 27th of December a force of men assembled at Fort Warden, and while one column advanced eastward to the nearest fords of the Kei, as a feint, another crossed the river lower down; Colonel Somerset with the cavalry at the same time sweeping the ground westward to the Gonubie. Pato escaped, but ten thousand cattle were brought into King William's Dec. 27.

1847. Town; the only casualties being two officers of the Rifle Brigade and one of the Seventy-third who, riding ahead of their men, were surprised by Kaffirs in ambush and killed. A few days later, on the 6th of January 1847, Maitland received a despatch recalling him, on account of his advanced age, and announcing that Sir Henry Pottinger, whom we have known in Sind and Afghanistan, would succeed him as Governor, with Lieutenant-general Sir George Berkeley as Commander of the troops. These gentlemen arrived on the 27th of January, and within a fortnight Pottinger started for the eastern frontier. Maitland, thinking the war to be over, had dismissed all burghers and ordered the Ninetieth to Port Elizabeth to embark for England, but Pottinger countermanded this order, and appealed for burgher volunteers to serve for a
March. month against Pato. In March accordingly Colonel Somerset scoured the country between the Keiskamma and Buffalo rivers in search of him, but saw few Kaffirs and recovered no cattle. Berkeley, meanwhile, opened a new port of supply at the mouth of the Buffalo river, which proved to be better than that at Waterloo Bay, and formed a new chain of posts along that stream from the sea to King William's Town which, though abandoned in consequence of Glenelg's policy, was now reoccupied and became once more an advanced base.

Notwithstanding the outward semblance of peace the Kaffirs, who had gained much and suffered little punishment during the late operations, were as well
June. inclined as ever to hostilities; and in June the chief, Sandile, having declined to restore the full numbers of certain stock stolen by one of his people, Pottinger determined to take him to task at once. A strong patrol of about three hundred men, half of them of the Seventh Dragoon Guards and the Forty-fifth, advanced to his kraal at Burnshill, but found it deserted, and was presently forced back by a large body of Kaffirs which engaged the rear-guard for the whole distance to

Block Drift. Berkeley then formed and filled up three depôts along the southern border of Sandile's country—King William's Town on the east, Fort White fifteen miles to west of it, and Fort Hare, about the same distance further to the west. From these he designed to send out patrols, lightly equipped, with one week's supplies, which should harass Sandile's people continually until they submitted. On the 17th of September the operations began. Few Kaffirs and still fewer oxen were seen, and it seems that few shots, if any, were fired, for the Rifle Brigade, which was most active in the work, records not the loss of a man. But after five weeks of this harrying Sandile, weary of continual evasion and hunger, surrendered; and Berkeley moved on to the Kei to mete out the same measure to Kreli and Pato. 1847. Sept.

Once again these tactics were successful. Both banks of the Kei were incessantly scoured, and, though few Kaffirs or cattle were ever seen, Pato's life was made such a burden to him that on the 16th of December he submitted. The only casualties were those of five officers, four of them belonging to the Seventy-third, who imprudently isolated themselves in a body and were cut off and killed; but the troops suffered, as was inevitable, great privation and fatigue. Berkeley's system of patrols, borrowed from Harry Smith, was, therefore, effective; though they had not, as Smith's had, the excitement of lifting great herds of cattle. Dec.

Before the end of the campaign Pottinger and Berkeley received orders to proceed to Madras, the one as Governor, the other as Commander-in-chief; and on the 1st of December, Harry Smith himself arrived, to the wild joy of the colonists, to take Pottinger's place. By the 17th he was at Grahamstown, where he issued a proclamation enlarging the boundaries of the Colony, which were henceforward to run from the mouth of the Keiskamma northward to the Klipplaats, following the course of that river and the

1847. Klaasmiths to the Stormberg and so to the Orange river. On the 23rd, he proceeded to Grahamstown, and, by another proclamation, took under the Queen's sovereignty the whole of the country between the Keiskamma and the Kei to the junction of the Black Kei with the Klipplaats, as a native reserve to be named British Kaffraria. This document he read aloud to a great assembly of the Kaffir chiefs and their followers, requiring each of the chiefs to kiss his foot in token of submission, which done, he shook hands with them and invited them all to a great feast. A final great assembly of Kaffirs and missionaries was held at King
1848. William's Town on the 7th of January 1848, when the
Jan. chiefs, including Sandile, whom Smith had released, took oath to a variety of articles, some at least of which could not have been intelligible to them. Then, closing the proceedings with two dramatic gestures, Harry Smith flattered himself that the Kaffir problem was solved. None the less three battalions of the line,[1] besides artillery and engineers, were maintained upon the frontier, besides two hundred of the Cape Mounted Rifles, and a corps of Kaffir police, four hundred and fifty strong, making a total force of about two thousand five hundred men. They were distributed in nine principal posts—Fort Glamorgan, at the mouth of the Buffalo, Fort Grey and Fort Murray, higher up the river, King William's Town, which was head-quarters, then to west of this, Fort White, Fort Cox, Fort Hare, and, in advance, upon the Gonubie river, Fort Wellington and Fort Waterloo.

The speediness of this settlement shows how boundless was Harry Smith's confidence in himself and in his influence upon the Kaffirs. Probably he had more weight with them than any living white man, but he made insufficient allowance for the changes that had been wrought since he left Cape Colony in 1837 through the reversal of D'Urban's policy by Glenelg. There were changes, too, in himself. Though sixty

[1] 2/45th, 73rd, 1st Rifle Brigade.

years of age, he was physically as active and energetic as ever, but his defects of character had grown upon him. The red ribbon and his flattering reception in England as hero of Aliwal had a little turned his head; and his appointment as Governor at the Cape, with authority practically to rectify Glenelg's blunders and to restore the policy of his old chief D'Urban, was not calculated to sober him. He had always been something of a talker and a braggart; he loved to occupy the centre of the stage; and, now that he was an autocrat and His Excellency, he was a little inclined to think that, looking to his popularity in the Colony, he had only to wave his hand to make all parties, English, Dutch and Kaffirs, sit down quietly to enjoy his beneficent rule. None the less he had by no means taken leave of shrewdness and insight. He was genuinely a warm-hearted and straightforward man, and, as a public servant, he had as high a sense of duty as ever. 1848.

Having, as he supposed, settled the question of the Kaffirs, he turned to what he rightly deemed the most urgent of all his duties, the reconciliation of the estranged Dutch emigrants. He had already thought out his plans for the settlement of affairs north of the Orange river; and, since these involved negotiations with the neighbouring chiefs of the Griquas and Basutos, he visited them first and then proceeded to Bloemfontein. The Dutch farmers, many of whom had served under him in 1835, gave him a warm welcome; but, hearing that the entire Dutch population of Natal was moving out of that Colony, he hurried away to stop them, and met the foremost, in a condition of great misery, on the Tugela river near the foot of the Drakensberg. They complained that, under British rule, so great an influx of blacks was permitted that there was no safety for them in Natal; nor would they accept his assurances that, if they would return, he would place things upon a better footing. However, they received Smith with all respect, and

1848. he treated them with kindness and consideration. By liberal offers of land and promises of protection he succeeded not only in inducing many to return, but joined to them also many families from the north of the Orange river who were already well affected to the British government.

For the rest, never doubting that his personal influence would render palatable any measure which he judged to be for their welfare, he resolved that British supremacy should follow the Dutch emigrants whithersoever they should go. He meant well by them, and could not believe that they should mistrust
March. him. On the 3rd of March he proclaimed the Queen's sovereignty over the whole of the territory between the Orange river and the Vaal. A resident Commissioner and magistrate was appointed, and Smith resolutely declined to leave more troops in this vast region than sixty men of the Cape Mounted Rifles. This done, he returned to Capetown, to be welcomed as the peacemaker of South Africa. Certainly the distances which he had traversed in the three months first following his disembarkation evinced amazing energy in a man of past sixty.

His back was hardly turned when signs of disaffection showed themselves in the new sovereignty. In truth, two out of every three Boers therein nourished their hatred of British rule as bitterly as ever. In July Pretorius called these to arms, drove the Commissioner from Bloemfontein and advancing to Middelvlei, on the northern bank of the Orange within easy distance of Colesberg, there halted and
July. sat down. On the 22nd of July Harry Smith at Capetown received the news of the revolt. He made arrangements for collecting troops at once, and starting himself on the 29th reached Fort Beaufort,
Aug. over six hundred miles distant, on the 5th of August. Thence he proceeded to Colesberg, where he found the first of his troops already arrived. Encamping on the south bank of the river over against the rebels,

he waited until the 20th for the rest of the troops to come in, and on the 26th began to pass them over the river in a caoutchouc pontoon. The crossing of eight hundred[1] men with their transport and thirty days' supplies occupied six days; and not until the 27th could he begin his march on Winburg, which was the great centre of disloyalty. Pretorius had retired towards Bloemfontein on the 17th without attempting to dispute the passage of the river; but on the 29th Smith's advanced parties obtained contact with the burghers at Boomplatz, about seventy miles north of Colesberg. Smith, who was so anxious to avoid a fight that he was dressed in civilian clothes, rode forward with a small escort to reconnoitre a hill in front, and was received with a volley which knocked over an officer and three men of the Cape Mounted Rifles, grazed the face of Smith's horse, and cut through one of his stirrup-leathers. Answering this challenge, Smith put his troops in motion to storm the hill; and the Boers fought a typical rear-guard action, holding their ground only while they could be sure of getting safely to their horses at the foot of the hill behind them, and then retiring to another hill in their rear to do likewise. They did attempt a counter-offensive against Smith's left flank, but this was effectively checked by the British guns; and at last when, after two hours' fighting they had been driven from their last position, they fled over the plain too rapidly to be pursued. The losses of the British troops, including the Cape Mounted Rifles, were seven officers and forty-seven men killed and wounded. The numbers of the rebels engaged and their losses are unknown; but it is conjectured that about five hundred were present, and they acknowledged their casualties to be fourteen killed and wounded. On its own tiny scale it was a sharp little affair, and the British lost more men than they need have done, from excessive eagerness.

1848. Aug. Aug. 29.

[1] 2 cos. 45th, 2 cos. 91st, 2 cos. 1/R.B., 4 cos. C.M.R., det. R.E. and R.A. with 3 six-pounder guns.

1848. Continuing his march on the following day Smith
Sept. reached Bloemfontein on the 2nd of September, and after two days' halt entered Winburg on the 7th, having encountered no further resistance. A proclamation was issued confiscating the property of those who had taken up arms; a fort was built at Bloemfontein, with a garrison of three companies of infantry and half a
Oct. company of artillery; and by the 6th of October Smith was back at King William's Town where, on the following day, he met a number of Kaffir chiefs. All was quiet on the frontier, and on the 21st he arrived at Capetown with peace apparently assured. His promptness and activity, astonishing in a man of his years, deservedly earned him the gratitude of the Colonists.

For a time his arrangements seemed to fulfil every purpose, and indeed they had been carefully thought out. By the appointment of Commissioners and magistrates in British Kaffraria he enabled the Kaffirs to carry their grievances and disputes to European judges, and delivered them from the capricious tyranny of their tribal chiefs. By the organisation of a corps of Kaffir police, four hundred strong, under an English officer named Davies, of great efficiency, he ensured the tracking of stolen cattle, if not to the actual dwelling-place of the thieves, at least to some chief who was held responsible for making good the theft. And the range of the Kaffir police was wide, for Davies thought nothing of riding sixty miles to make an arrest. On the Tyumie river, to north of Fort Cox, Smith had established military settlements by giving grants of land to old soldiers who were willing to take their discharge in the Colony. To west of Fort Beaufort he had taken the more doubtful course of giving to a chief named Hermanus, who had been loyal throughout the last Kaffir war, a strip of fertile land on the Blinkwater river; while on the main branch of the Kat river there had for some time past been a settlement of Hottentots, which

was supposed to be a bulwark of defence, though in former wars it had proved to be of doubtful value for the purpose, if not a positive encumbrance. On the whole the frontier seemed to be quiet and safe. The rank and file of the Kaffirs, secure under British jurisdiction, were settling down to steady husbandry and beginning to acquire property; and all promised well. The British government, as usual, was clamouring for the restoration of its troops, for it was still trying to make every battalion do the work of two; and in May 1850, Harry Smith thought himself justified in sending back to England the battalion of the Rifle Brigade. 1848. 1850.

In Capetown, unfortunately, affairs were not so peaceful. Late in 1849 Lord Grey, who was at the Colonial Office, announced that he was about to send out to the Colony some convicts. The Colonists protested loudly, and Harry Smith supported them; but in spite of his remonstrances a shipload of convicts arrived in September, and he had no legal power to send them elsewhere. He could only prevent them from landing, which he did, until in February 1850 he at last received permission to send them to Van Diemen's Land, or, to use the modern name, Tasmania. But meanwhile a furious agitation against everything English had been raging in the Colony; and, as it happened, at this very moment there was broached the question of granting to it some measure of representative government. In such circumstances every Colonist was inclined to regard proposals that emanated from Downing Street with suspicion; and the factious and fanatical were violent in speech and obstructive in action. Harry Smith needed all his tact and firmness to persuade any gentlemen of standing to be of his Council, and his hands were full of business at Capetown without need for distractions on the eastern frontier.

Hardly, however, had he sent back the Rifle Brigade when there were signs of unrest among some

1850. of the Kaffirs. Sandile, chafing over the power that he had lost through the superintendence of the tribes by English Commissioners, began to conspire secretly for the expulsion of the white man; and he was presently seconded by a witch-doctor, or fanatical impostor, named Umlanjeni, whose ravings soon gained him an extraordinary influence. The unrest was promoted, as invariably happens not less among civilised than uncivilised communities, by a great natural catastrophe. British Kaffraria was afflicted by a terrible drought. The Kaffirs were driven almost to starvation, for their cows gave no milk, and they could not in mid-winter and early spring grow themselves corn; and Umlanjeni, of course, proclaimed that it was the English who were drying up the country with the sun. The first sign of trouble was that all Kaffir servants employed by the Europeans suddenly forsook their masters and fled, abandoning any cattle that they possessed, and even wages that were due to them. The Commissioner still protested with confidence that all was tranquil in British Kaffraria, but the farmers became increasingly
Oct. nervous; and on the 17th of October, Harry Smith took steamer to the mouth of the Buffalo and hurried to Grahamstown. Thither he summoned the neighbouring Kaffir chiefs to meet him and made them swear allegiance; but Sandile did not attend, and Smith promptly issued a proclamation deposing him from his chieftainship. The terror of Smith's name probably alone prevented an immediate outbreak.

By November thefts of cattle and sheep, by ones and twos, were common, and it became well known that these were the work of gangs of vagabond Kaffirs and Hottentots. Moreover, it was almost certain that these found a refuge on the land of Hermanus, whose loyalty thus became suspect. Meanwhile, Harry Smith had hardly been on the eastern frontier three weeks before urgent business carried him back to Capetown. The Governor of the Cape, in fact, with a disturbed frontier to eastward and a disturbed capital

seven hundred miles to west of it, had more work than one man could do. Smith had not been in Capetown more than fifteen days when he was recalled to the marches. There had been an affray between the police and the Kaffirs over the levying of a fine for the theft of cattle, and the signs of coming war became more threatening. To make matters worse the country was now eaten up by swarms of locusts, which destroyed every green thing that had been spared by drought, and made it almost impossible for the settlers to keep their stock alive. On the 9th of December, Harry Smith reached King William's Town, having brought with him the Seventy-third; and on the 10th he called upon the loyal inhabitants of the frontier-districts to arm themselves, so as to release the troops for active service. By this time all the farmers on the north-eastern marches were driving their cattle westward beyond reach of the raiders, and Harry Smith, being weak in troops, laid himself out to temporise with the Kaffirs in the hope of saving the corn harvest. On the 15th he summoned another meeting of Kaffir chiefs, received once again their oath of fealty, and offered a reward of five hundred pounds for the capture of Sandile. Then, seconding words by acts, he set his forces in motion, and himself went to Fort Cox, whither he summoned Sandile's tribe, the Gaikas. On the 19th of December he met them, all chiefs except Sandile and his brother being present, and threatened them with the arrival of an endless fleet of ships at the mouth of the Buffalo. One of the chiefs asked if His Excellency had any ships which would sail up the Amatola mountains, a shrewd question, which betrayed the confidence of the Kaffirs in their ability to resist the English. It was noticed that they had not even deigned to drive their cattle away, so sure were they of their power to protect them.[1]

1850. Nov. Dec.

The regular regiments at Harry Smith's disposal were the Sixth, Forty-fifth, Seventy-third, Ninety-first

[1] Godlonton and Irving, *Narrative of the Kaffir War*, pp. 45, 46.

1850. and Cape Mounted Rifles, besides four hundred Kaffir
Dec. police. But all the battalions were weak, and more than half of the Forty-fifth, as well as many of the Cape Mounted Rifles, were in the Orange River Sovereignty and in Natal; and thus the entire force fit for the field, exclusive of the police, did not amount to two thousand men. Smith's line extended from King William's Town, through Fort White and Fort Cox to Fort Hare, but the first named post was entrusted to friendly Kaffirs; Fort White was held by thirty or forty men of the Forty-fifth; and the bulk of the force was concentrated to westward. The right, under Colonel Eyre of the Seventy-third, was pushed forward to Kabousie Nek, fifteen miles north and east of Fort Cox, to prevent any junction between Kreli's people to eastward and Sandile's on the upper Keiskamma; the centre was at Fort Cox, where Smith fixed his head-quarters; and the left was at Fort Hare under Colonel Somerset. On
Dec. 24. the 24th of December, Smith hearing that Sandile had taken up a strong position in the Keiskamma Hoek, sent up a patrol of about six hundred men,[1] under command of Colonel Mackinnon, the commissioner for the district, to dislodge him. Mackinnon was received with friendliness until he reached a rocky gorge of the Keiskamma, about five miles from Fort Cox, where the men could only move in single file. Through this strait the Mounted Rifles and police passed unmolested; but fire was opened upon the British infantry in rear, who had to fight hard to dislodge the Kaffirs but eventually extricated themselves with a loss of eighteen killed and wounded, whose arms, besides six casks of ammunition, were abandoned. On the same day three men of the Forty-fifth, who had been sent out on escort duty from Fort White, were cut off by the Kaffirs; twelve more, despatched to their rescue, suffered the same fate; and the savages, emboldened by their success, then attacked the fort itself, but were

[1] 6th Foot, 244; 73rd, 77; C.M.R., 173; Kaffir Police, 92; Total, all ranks, 586.

repulsed with heavy loss by the garrison of seventeen men, aided by a few civilians. On the morrow, Christmas Day, parties of Kaffirs entered three of the military settlements in a friendly fashion, and, suddenly turning upon the unsuspecting inhabitants, murdered nearly fifty men. Altogether the opening of the campaign was unpleasant. Smith was so anxious to maintain peace that he had ordered Mackinnon upon no account to fire until fired upon;[1] and it was a disquieting reflection that the Kaffirs had allowed the Cape Mounted Rifles and police of his column to pass through their ambuscade unharmed but had closed with fury upon the white men. Their treacherous dealing towards the other parties, which they had cut off, seemed further to imply that they counted upon their ultimate success. 1850.

In the circumstances, Smith recalled Mackinnon to Fort Cox and Eyre from Kabousie Nek to King William's Town; and now a succession of heavy blows fell upon him. A party of Kaffir police at Whittlesea broke into mutiny on the 28th of December and ran off to join Sandile. The disloyalty of the entire body became so evident that at all other posts efforts were made to disarm them; but practically the whole of them deserted to the enemy, about one-third of them with their arms and equipment. Worse than this, some of the Cape Mounted Rifles, at the post of Line Drift on the Keiskamma, had shown the like signs of insubordination. Further, it was now evident that Hermanus had thrown in his lot with the rebels, and that the Hottentots of the Kat river settlement were wavering in their allegiance. Lastly, the Kaffirs swarmed in great force around Fort Cox, which was completely isolated. Twice Colonel Somerset at Fort Hare tried to relieve the place, but failed; and he then wrote to Harry Smith, advising him not to move out with his infantry, for they would be cut to pieces, but with two hundred and fifty of the Cape Mounted Rifles only. Dec. 28.

[1] Godlonton and Irving, pp. 48-60.

1850. Dec. Smith accordingly donned the uniform of the corps, and, after a ride of twelve miles through continual fire, he came safely into King William's Town on the 31st December. From thence, now thoroughly disillusioned, he fulminated a proclamation calling upon the Colonists to rise *en masse*, and "to destroy and exterminate these most barbarous and treacherous savages. The Gaikas," he added, "must be driven from the Amatolas and expelled for ever." [1]

1851. Jan. During the month of January 1851, Hottentots and Kaffirs swarmed across the frontier to murder, pillage and destroy; and the country from Grahamstown to the Orange river became almost a desert, the homesteads being abandoned, and the flocks and herds driven either westward by the settlers or eastward by the savages. The only cheerful incident was that, on the 7th, Hermanus was repulsed with heavy loss by civilians and Fingos in an attack that he had delivered upon Fort Beaufort, and that the old ruffian himself was among the killed. On the 23rd January again Somerset, with only one hundred of the Cape Mounted Rifles and four hundred Fingos, repelled, after six hours' fighting, an assault of some six thousand Kaffirs upon Fort Hare. But against these successes were to be set the determined spirit of the savages, and the certainty that the Hottentots had thrown in their lot with them. Moreover, there was a new and most disquieting symptom of danger in the behaviour of the white settlers. With the exception of a few in remote districts, who defended themselves with great gallantry, the bulk of the farmers, and principally the Dutch, showed "dogged and determined inactivity," [2] and would not be induced to move to the frontier. Two years of political agitation had raised a bad spirit among the Boers, and faction was busy at Capetown itself. There was a party which by voice and pen did its utmost to discourage recruiting, to champion

[1] Godlonton and Irving, p. 90.

[2] Montagu to Colonial Office, 31 Jan. 1851.

the cause of the Hottentots, and even to defend and excuse the atrocities of which they had been guilty. From Harry Smith's own utterances and from other evidence it should seem that certain missionaries were in great measure accountable for the Hottentot revolt, and that the same evil influences which had wrecked the wise policy of D'Urban were still at work. The fact seems to be that one section at least of the missionaries aspired to keep the control of the black men in their own hands, and would go to any length, in defiance of the government, to compass their end. Being strongly evangelical (to use the cant phrase) in their religious opinions, they counted upon support from England, which, since the Reform Bill of 1832, lay under the heel of the Nonconformists; and they wrought their mischief with confidence and without disguise. Yet they would have been mortally offended had they been compared with the Jesuits in Paraguay. 1851. Feb.

The whole situation was most difficult and dangerous. A single false step, a single real disaster, a single sign of weakness would turn a rebellion of certain tribes and certain races into a general rising of black against white; and the whole burden of the responsibility was thrown upon Harry Smith. Thanks to the ineptitude of Glenelg, who had restored the fastnesses of the Fish river to the Kaffirs, there was no secure communication between Grahamstown and King William's Town; and Smith was therefore obliged to act upon a double line of operations. He had perforce one marine base at East London, with a chain of posts running thence to King William's Town, Fort White and Fort Cox; and another at Port Elizabeth, with a chain through Grahamstown to Fort Beaufort and Fort Hare. These posts numbered twelve in all, including Capetown, besides which troops were required to occupy Natal and a station in the Orange River Sovereignty; and the garrisons ate deeply into Smith's resources of men, consuming half of his regular troops

1851. Feb. and little less than half of his native levies.[1] None the less he never dreamed of withdrawing a single post, nor of falling back for a single inch. So only he maintained a bold front, heedless of what passed in his rear, he necessarily detained some thousands of Kaffirs to watch him, while his force formed a nucleus round which any new levies could group themselves. Moreover, so long as he remained at King William's Town the friendly chief, Pato, whose tribe held the lower reaches of the Buffalo river, was firm in his allegiance, and communication with East London was thus secure. Had Smith removed himself from the frontier, it is hardly too much to say that the Colony would have been lost.

As to his troops, all four of his British battalions had gained experience of Kaffir warfare under Maitland; and the Seventy-third, under an excellent colonel, Eyre, and the Ninety-first in particular, knew their business thoroughly. Their ordinary dress being hopelessly unsuited for rough work in the South African bush, a grey jacket or a canvas blouse was substituted for the ridiculous coatee, and untanned leather pouches for the black pouches of peace. Broad white leather peaks, affixed to the hideous little warm forage-cap of the period, made a light and serviceable head-dress in displacement of the heavy and useless shako.[2] All officers seem to have carried fire-arms,

[1] Return of 18th February 1851:

R.A.	7 officers,	83	N.C.O.s and men.
R. Sappers and Miners	7 „	185	„
6th Foot	19 „	541	„
45th Foot	15 „	437	„
73rd Highlanders	15 „	515	„
Cape Mounted Rifles	33 „	868	„
Native Levies	53 „	4338	„
Fingos	16 „	892	„
Two 12-pr. howitzers.			
Three 6-pr. guns.			
Required for garrisons	63 officers,	3288	N.C.O.s and men.
At disposal for the field	127 „	5545	„

[2] Smith to Sec. of State, 3 Feb. 1851, asking for grey jackets for the 73rd. The 74th had blouses; *see* King's *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, p. 27.

generally sporting rifles, which weapons, with the newly introduced conical bullets, were already making great strides towards perfection.[1] Of the senior officers, Major-general Somerset, a veteran of many Kaffir wars, commanded in the north-east, that is to say, at the left of the line, with head-quarters at Fort Beaufort. He was efficient, and knew every point in the game. In the district of King William's Town, or at the right of the line, Colonel Mackinnon, a district Commissioner, ranked next to Harry Smith. He seems to have been a plodding methodical person without dash or audacity. The officers in command of battalions seem one and all to have known their work, and the artillery supplied in the person of Major Wilmot an excellent leader of a mobile column. But not one could compare in boldness, activity and inspiration, with Harry Smith. 1851. Feb.

Transport was a great difficulty, oxen being scarce and weak owing to the drought of 1850; and pack-animals were substituted for ox-waggons for all except what are termed the "rolling magazines" of the field-force, the forest, moreover, being impassable by wheeled vehicles. The whole problem of supply was baffling in the extreme, for the victualling of the various posts, even for a few weeks, compelled the use of large unwieldy convoys, every one of which demanded a strong escort; and the accumulation of any great bulk of supplies in one of them—enough, for instance, to furnish a week's rations for a mobile column—almost necessarily meant an increase of the garrison. Moreover, escort-duty found employment for bodies of men who were badly wanted for active work in the field. In fact the whole campaign bristled with difficulties; but Harry Smith at its close protested that the men

[1] An old officer of the Rifle Brigade, who served in this campaign as Lieutenant Bramston, told me many years ago that he saw a Kaffir on the skyline killed at a range of 1000 yards by an officer with a Lancaster rifle of the latest pattern; and *see* King's *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, pp. 51, 214.

1851. Feb. had fought well because they had been well and regularly fed; a fact which reflects credit upon his Commissaries.

The field of operations is extremely difficult to define, for Harry Smith had to deal not only with a Kaffir invasion, which would have been a comparatively trifling matter, but with an internal revolt. Practically it embraced a triangle, of which one side ran from the Orange river to the mouth of the Kei, and another from the same apex to Port Elizabeth, the base being the coast line between the two latter points. The most formidable enemy were the Kaffirs beyond the Fish river. They were reckoned to be from fifteen to twenty thousand strong, with plenty of fire-arms and abundance of ammunition, thanks to theft and to smuggling by white traders. They were brave, they were cunning, they were always present though rarely seen, they were very swift to take advantage of any blunder, and in the forest and their own fastnesses were of course infinitely superior in mobility, swiftness and woodcraftmanship to the British soldier. But apart from them, gangs of plundering banditti, Hottentots and Kaffirs, roamed about the Colony, stealing where they could and murdering where they dared; and the invading Kaffirs were shrewd enough to appreciate the value of such allies. Though, therefore, they confronted in lesser or greater numbers every point in Harry Smith's two lines, their favourite stronghold was the Amatola mountains, where all enemies of the white man could find refuge in almost inaccessible forest, and could bide their time for further forays into the Colony.

The best way to deal with such an enemy, as Harry Smith had proved, was to harry him by constant inroads, and to carry off his one treasure—his cattle. But in January he was still too weak in men to patrol very effectively, and he studiously avoided asking for reinforcements from England. Possibly, having sent back the Rifle Brigade, he felt some false shame at

the reversal of his own recommendations; possibly he felt genuine repugnance to throwing additional strain upon ministers at home, and upon the strength of an army which he knew to be already overworked. He of all men, having served in the Punjab, could appreciate how heavy must be the demands of India, and, it is likely, could foresee the coming campaign in Burma. Possibly, again, he had counted at the outset upon the willing support of the Boers, who had served him so well in 1834. But, before the end of January, he must have been aware that he could no longer rely upon the Boers; and, after all, internal rebellion was a complication which no one had foreseen. It is probable, therefore, that he was wrong in not applying at once for four or five thousand regular troops; though such a conclusion may depend greatly upon wisdom after the event. Ministers, for their part, read between the lines of his despatches that he was in straits, and, greatly to their credit, ordered reinforcements to be prepared for him unasked. But probably they did not feel the greater confidence in him because he abstained from putting forward his request in plain language. 1851. Feb.

In January, therefore, little more was done than the revictualling of Fort White and Fort Cox, which was accomplished by a column of two thousand men, three-fourths of them friendly natives, with little difficulty and no loss. On the 13th of February a rather stronger column escorted reinforcements to Fort Hare and returned to King William's Town on the 19th, after a march of a hundred miles through the enemy's country, having lost no more than twenty-five killed and wounded in a series of petty engagements, and inflicted considerable loss on the Kaffirs. A few days later Somerset, in concert with some burghers, marched against the rebel Hottentots in the valley of the Kat. These surrendered their women and children, but foolishly ensconced themselves in Fort Armstrong, a post of some strength, which Somerset speedily shelled

1851. Feb. to pieces about their ears, and so overcame all resistance. One hundred and sixty Kaffirs and Hottentots were killed in the course of the operations, and nearly four hundred prisoners were taken. Somerset then broke up the settlement, restoring much stolen property to its rightful owners, removing the missionaries and disarming every soul. The prisoners were removed to Fort Hare for trial by court-martial, and in due time forty-seven of them were condemned to death, which sentence Harry Smith commuted to transportation for life. This lenience caused much discontent in the Colony; and there can be no doubt that some of the ringleaders deserved to be shot, and that it would not have been amiss if certain of the missionaries had shared their fate. But the rabid fanaticism of the missionary societies in England, and Glenelg's weakness in yielding to it, had done their work; and Smith, with a difficult campaign on his hands at the front and malignant factions working against him at Capetown, might well have shrunk, even if he had not been by nature a merciful man, from embarrassing himself further with the clamour of Exeter Hall. The position of a British general at such times is difficult, for there is always a party in England which, safe under the protection of the English police, counts the safety of their countrymen over sea as of small account compared with their own exalted professions of humanity. If he has the courage to take a hundred lives in order to save a thousand, he does so at the risk of public disgrace. So cruel are the tender mercies of the sentimental.[1]

By the third week in February, thanks to the exertions of Montagu at Capetown, Smith found himself at the head of a force of about nine thousand men. Rather more than three thousand of these, including the Cape Mounted Rifles and a small party of seamen and marines from the Queen's ship *Castor*, were regular

[1] Smith to Sec. of State, 4th July 1851. Godlonton and Irving, pp. 258, 259.

troops, not counting a body of three hundred English infantry recruited in Cape Colony. On the 25th he began his operations by sending out a patrol of about four hundred regular soldiers and sixteen hundred natives to scour the country west of King William's Town as far as the Keiskamma. Few Kaffirs or cattle were seen, though the enemy hung upon the flanks of the column, firing at long range; and within a week the patrol returned, having accomplished little or nothing. On the 5th of March a second patrol of rather greater strength, with two guns, was sent to revictual Fort White and Fort Cox, and was assailed upon both flanks upon its return march. Mackinnon, who was in command, knowing every inch of the ground, awaited the right moment made a counter-attack, when, using his infantry to drive the Kaffirs under the fire of his guns, he inflicted on them heavy loss, laying low over one hundred at a cost of five casualties to himself. On the 10th at midnight yet another patrol started for the upper waters of the Buffalo in the hope of making large captures of cattle, but returned unsuccessful, having found none and seen only a few Kaffirs at a distance. All of these enterprises meant great fatigue and hardship for the troops, who, having gained nothing in return for their exertions, began to feel discouragement. But now came an event which convinced Harry Smith that the time was come for him to take the field in person.

1851. Feb. 25. March.

On the 13th forty-three of the Cape Mounted Rifles deserted in a body from King William's Town with their arms. As soon as daylight came on the 14th Smith paraded the rest of the detachment, dismounted, with the Sixth and Seventy-third upon either flank of them, and the guns loaded with grape in their rear. He ordered them to ground arms, and on the spot dismissed all except the Europeans among them. Thus over three hundred invaluable mounted infantry were lost at a stroke. Another detachment at East London was also disarmed; but those with

1851. March. Somerset remained faithful. Harry Smith was bitterly chagrined. He had ridden out with these very men when beleaguered in Fort Cox; he had worn their uniform, and was as proud of them as of his own beloved Rifle Brigade. The incident was disquieting above all, because it seemed to indicate that disaffection was spreading among all black men. He decided to make an offensive movement forthwith.[1]

Having information that large bodies of Kaffirs and rebel Hottentots were gathering in the Amatola mountains to rescue the Hottentot prisoners in confinement at Fort Hare, Smith, on the morning of the 18th, moved to Fort White with a small party of irregular horse—the only mounted troops now left to him—three guns and about two thousand infantry, including strong detachments of the Sixth and Seventy-third. Marching westward from Fort White at daybreak of the 19th he manœuvred in four columns to drive the enemy on to an isolated hill, called Mount Pegu; which done, he sent native levies round to intercept the enemy's retreat and then stormed the hill, with the result that forty or fifty Kaffirs were killed, at the cost of a single friendly native wounded. He then returned to Fort Hare, gave his men a day's rest on the 20th, and at dawn of the 21st started for Fort White by way of Fort Cox. Midway between these two posts he fell in with the enemy, attacked them in their fastnesses of rock and bush, dispersed them with heavy loss, destroyed their crops and kraals, and brought his troops back to Fort White two hours after nightfall. Giving them a day's rest on the 22nd, Smith, at daybreak of the 23rd, struck westward into the valley of the Keiskamma, swept off a thousand head of cattle, devastated the Kaffirs' crops and brought the column back, with its rear-guard constantly engaged, to Fort White an hour after dark. The day was intensely hot; the men were for many hours out of reach of water, and they had covered thirty-six miles, apart

[1] Smith to Sec. of State, 17 March 1851.

from constant skirmishes, in sixteen hours. The casualties for the day did not exceed ten killed and wounded, whereas the Kaffirs had been severely punished. After another day's halt, in the hope that the enemy would attempt to rescue the captured cattle, Smith, on the 25th, marched back to King William's Town unmolested. The Kaffirs had had enough of him for the present. 1851. March.

The foregoing will give some idea of the inspiring activity and vigour of the Commander-in-chief, and of the exhausting work which he required of his troops. But it seems that all alike, the old soldiers of the Sixth and Seventy-third, the white volunteers and the Fingo levies, were infected by his spirit. He himself, we are told, was ubiquitous when in action, now with the infantry, now with the guns, now with the native levies, now with his too scanty body of horse ; now absolutely alone, having sent off his escort to secure some advantage. His operations, so much more effective than Mackinnon's, heartened the men to their work, and renewed their confidence in themselves; and they bore all hardships and privations the more cheerfully because they were shared by their gallant old chief.[1]

Nevertheless Smith's troubles and anxieties were no whit diminished. The Hottentot banditti increased and multiplied, murdering, ravaging and plundering over a wide area of the eastern districts of the Colony, and striving to stir up the enmity of every Kaffir tribe against the whites. Far to north the Basutos became so aggressive that they brought upon themselves the vengeance of a small party of British and Boer farmers, who attacked them on the 25th of March, hunted them for eighteen miles and slew over two hundred of them. This was satisfactory, so far as it went, but it could not arrest the complaints and appeals which poured in upon the Governor from those who had suffered at the hands of the Hottentot robbers. Moreover, every day seemed

[1] Godlonton and Irving, pp. 287-289, 294-297.

1851. to bring to light some fresh plot or some new instance of treachery; and the Kaffirs showed an activity in some directions which was worthy of a highly civilised power. Hottentot emissaries from Sandile were discovered in King William's Town itself, striving to seduce native levies from their allegiance; and the false reports disseminated after every engagement of Kaffir victories and British disasters would not have dishonoured the *Moniteur* when at the height of its career of mendacity. Few British commanders have been more severely tried than was Harry Smith in the early months of 1851; and the trial was the harder since an ironic fate had selected him to pay the penalty for the blundering which had undone the good work of himself and D'Urban, and had laid on him the sins of the upright, pious, sentimental and hopelessly incompetent Glenelg.

CHAPTER XL

SHORN of most of his mounted troops through the defection of the Cape Mounted Rifles, Harry Smith found himself, as he said, paralysed for all distant and energetic movements. He wrote home at once for four hundred recruits from England to re-form the corps, and meanwhile endeavoured, though in vain, to raise a body of three hundred Boers. He felt justified early in April in restoring their arms to one hundred and twenty of the disarmed Mounted Rifles, which was of some slight help; and, whatever his deficiencies in men, he did not allow his troops to stand idle. Somerset had a successful brush with the enemy on the Kat and Mancazana rivers on the 27th and 28th of March; and Mackinnon, after raiding the upper waters of the Buffalo and destroying the crops between the 5th and 8th of April, scoured the Keiskamma and its tributaries with three separate patrols between the 15th of April and the 1st of May, inflicting on the last occasion heavy loss upon the enemy. At the beginning of May most of the Cape Mounted Rifles returned to their duty, and throughout the month the patrols of Somerset and Mackinnon continued at intervals in various quarters, not without some sharp fighting and appreciable captures of cattle. The casualties were insignificant, never amounting to twenty and rarely to ten in any of these expeditions; but fatigue and hardship took their toll of the troops, who through week after week enjoyed little rest.

1851. April. May.

At last in May reinforcements began to arrive, first three hundred drafts for the battalions already in the

1851. May. Colony, which arrived on the 6th, and on the 16th the Seventy-fourth Highlanders, rather over six hundred strong. Thereupon Harry Smith sent additional troops to Fort Cox with orders for patrolling of the Amatola mountains from that side. But his projects against that quarter were delayed by new misfortunes. In the first week of June the Hottentots at the Missionary station of Theopolis, twenty-five miles south of Grahamstown, broke into revolt, and the march of the Seventy-fourth northward was interrupted by the necessity for routing these banditti and recapturing the cattle which they had stolen. Simultaneously Mackinnon was sent to patrol the line of the Keiskamma so as to prevent any collusion between the tribes in that quarter and the Hottentot insurgents. June. In fact, for the greater part of June, Smith was more anxious for Grahamstown in his rear than for any enemy in front. Then another harassing blow fell upon him. The six months, for which term many of his Hottentot levies had been engaged, came to an end, and only a few would consent to re-enlist. Thus the services of eighteen hundred natives were lost, and it was an anxious question whether they might not join their disaffected countrymen. Meanwhile the depredations of the banditti in the Colony continued to work great damage, and the settlers, who might have put an end to them with little difficulty, remained steady in their refusal to come in arms to the help of the government. To make matters worse there was the threat of another drought, which would render operations difficult owing to lack of forage and must necessarily increase the general suffering and discontent.[1]

None the less, on the 26th of June, Harry Smith was able to make a general and combined movement in the Amatola mountains, Somerset moving from Fort Hare north-eastward, while Colonel Cooper worked due east from Fort Cox, and Mackinnon, in two columns, followed the upper waters of the Keiskamma and the

[1] Smith to Sec. of State, 14, 17 June, 20 Aug. 1851.

Quilli Quilli from the south. The operations lasted 1851.
for three days, in the course of which, after some sharp June.
fighting, two thousand cattle were captured and large stores of the enemy's grain were destroyed—the latter an expedient which Harry Smith confessed to be revolting to a Christian mind, but in the circumstances inevitable. He did not look for any immediate effect from this operation, for the war must be practically one of attrition, and must be brought to an end by harassing the Kaffirs until they could bear no more. Somerset accordingly made another foray to eastward from the 2nd to the 5th of July, and immediately upon his return July.
to Fort Hare struck westward to the tangle of rock, forest and mountain, which was soon to become familiar in every mouth by the general name of the Waterkloof. Always for the men there were the same arduous marches over rough country, the same contest with invisible foes, and, at this particular time of year, violent changes of temperature, the cold being intense and the ground white with frost at 6 A.M., though the shade was unpleasantly warm and the sun unbearable three hours later. Sandstorms, which made every man's life a burden, came as an occasional variety; and the Kaffirs finally evicted Somerset's patrols from this quarter by setting fire to the grass and so destroying all pasturage. On the 30th of July accordingly the column retired southward, marching for nine miles over a blackened plain and choked by the dust of the ashes.[1]

Meanwhile Smith had never ceased his continual raids upon the enemy in all quarters, scouring the valley of the Fish river and the upper waters of the Buffalo, hunting the banditti in the Colony and leaving the enemy no rest. By August these measures seemed Aug.
to be producing some effect. One chief, Kreli, beyond the Kei, showed signs of repentance and Sandile himself begged Pato, the friendly chief on the lower Buffalo, to intercede for him. But these hopeful signs

[1] King, pp. 68-75.

1851. on Smith's front were neutralised by a fresh incursion
Aug. of banditti into the valley of the Fish river in his rear; and his energies during the greater part of August were devoted to the dispersion of these marauding gangs. On the 20th he was heartened by the arrival of a further reinforcement in the shape of the Second Queen's; and, having received permission to borrow yet more troops from Mauritius, in case of need, he obtained from thence the reserve battalion of the Twelfth Foot, which landed at East London on the 24th. He was further informed that the Twelfth Lancers and a battalion of the Sixtieth were on their way to him, so that he could hope to carry out really important operations in September. And there was need for them. The pretended submission of Kreli and Sandile was short-lived. It had been induced by a failure of ammunition; but this deficiency had been made good by white traders and smugglers, and the spirits of both chiefs had been revived by the ravings of
Sept. their prophet. By the first week in September they had again become daring and aggressive, and they now developed a new system of warfare. They gathered themselves together into two principal strongholds—in the north the almost impenetrable forests and mountains of the Kroome range, with its offshoots of the Blinkwater and the Waterkloof; and in the south the rough country between the Fish and Keiskamma rivers. From these centres they sent a succession of plundering parties eastward into the Colony; and it was becoming evident that, if the war was to be brought to an end, the enemy must not only be expelled from these fastnesses, but that troops must be stationed in them permanently to prevent them from returning. This was the reason why an increase of force was imperatively necessary to Smith. He had not yet quite sufficient for his purpose, but meanwhile he stuck to his policy of giving his enemy no rest in either quarter.

The operations in the north were committed to Colonel Fordyce of the Seventy-fourth, a very compe-

tent officer, with two hundred and fifty of his own regiment and four hundred Fingos. Approaching the Kroome range from the south on the 7th of September he led his little column by an arduous climb of two hours to the summit, and halting in the open was presently attacked, as he had hoped, by large bodies of Kaffirs. He beat them off, at trifling cost to himself, with heavy loss, and then, having little reserve of ammunition, began to descend by the way that he had come. When once the column had entered the forest the Kaffirs at once closed upon it in flanks and rear, but were successfully held at bay until the Fingos were seized with panic and rushed down upon the rear-guard. There was then some confusion and very rough hand-to-hand fighting, but, in spite of all disadvantages, the Seventy-fourth extricated themselves with no greater loss than seventeen killed and wounded. In the south Mackinnon started on the 6th to patrol the Fish river with over nine hundred[1] regular troops and some three hundred levies, which were distributed into two columns under Colonel Michel of the Sixth and Colonel Eyre. Here again, though the enemy was heavily punished, there was a mishap. A party of the Queen's went astray in the forest and was cut off, with a loss of thirty-two, including one officer, killed and twenty-one wounded. The casualties of the remainder of the force did not exceed sixteen; but in petty warfare of this description nervous people, both in the Colony and at home, always magnify the loss of fifty men into a disaster; and the mistake of a captain or a subaltern—pardonable enough in a wild strange country—is visited directly upon the Commander-in-chief.[2] 1851. Sept.

As a matter of fact these operations appear to have produced no result beyond the killing of a certain number of Kaffirs, for the enemy returned to the

[1] 2nd Queen's, 398; 6th Foot, 419; 73rd, 152; Marines, 52.

[2] Smith to Sec. of State, Aug. 20, Sept. 8 (with enclosures); Sept. 18, with Fordyce's and Mackinnon's reports of Sept. 9 and 17, 1851.

1851. Sept. strongholds of the Fish river directly the patrols had left. Smith therefore decided to strengthen the one post, Fort Peddie, which he held in that quarter, and to send Eyre with the Seventy-third to watch the eastern bank of the river, while he turned the bulk of his force upon the Kroome range. The Twelfth Lancers and the second battalion of the Sixtieth had arrived at the mouth of the Buffalo on the 27th of September, but were unable to cross the bar until the Oct. 3rd of October; and of course they would need several days after the voyage to bring them into condition for service. But as fast as reinforcements reached Smith, fresh difficulties crowded upon him. The Basutos now threatened trouble again in the north, while far away in Natal there was dangerous menace from the Zulu chief, Panda. In October, Harry Smith had under his command about six thousand six hundred regular troops, besides nine hundred of the reconstituted Cape Mounted Rifles, or seventy-five hundred men in all.[1] But of these at least six hundred were required for the garrisons of the Orange River Sovereignty and Natal, and at least a fourth, if not a third, of the remainder to hold his numerous posts, since his native levies were now seriously weakened. Practically, therefore, he had only five thousand men with which to carry on the war against an ubiquitous enemy over an area twice as large as the British Isles. For the first time, therefore, he now begged for a reinforcement of two more battalions. As he justly observed, a battalion numbered but six service-companies, and consequently did not go far; but the request was not

[1] Return of October 16, 1851:

Regiment.	*Officers.*	*Men.*	*Regiment.*	*Officers.*	*Men.*
12th Lancers	24	425	45th Foot	34	1056
R.E.	11	200	60th „	25	656
R.A.	16	283	73rd „	24	633
2nd Queen's	24	655	74th „	25	649
6th Foot	23	654	91st „	21	660
12th „	20	478	C.M.R.	42	859

Total: 289 Officers, 7200 N.C.O.s and men.

likely to be welcome to a British Cabinet in the tenth month of a seemingly unsuccessful campaign.[1] 1851. Oct.

Somerset meanwhile, with every man that could be spared, had begun his operations in the Kroome range, dividing his force into two columns; the one of seven hundred men of the Twelfth and Seventy-fourth, with three hundred and fifty levies, under Colonel Fordyce; the other composed of the Queen's, Sixth and Ninety-first, with two guns, under Colonel Michel. The Kroome mountains are a rugged offshoot thrown out to south by a high table-land, and connected with it by a narrow leading spur or neck—narrow because it is straitened between the heads of two deep wooded valleys which run down at right angles to it, that to west being the Waterkloof and that to east Fuller's Hoek. Both were famous strongholds of the Kaffirs, particularly the Waterkloof, where was hidden away the natural citadel, by repute impregnable, of the Gaika chief Macomo. It was arranged that Fordyce should ascend the Kroome range from the south to the neck above mentioned, while Michel should drive the northward table-land down towards him. Fordyce was in position before dawn of the 14th of October, and two hours later Michel was seen sharply engaged on the northern side of the Waterkloof. In due time Fordyce was ordered to join him. So far he had not seen an enemy; but no sooner was he in motion than the Kaffirs engaged him from the edge of the forest on both flanks and in rear. They were driven off; and Somerset, having united the two columns, withdrew north-westward over the open. The Kaffirs could not resist the temptation to follow him; and Somerset, not attempting to check them, drew them on until they were far from the forest, when he let loose a party of irregular horse upon them, which galloped through and through them, cutting down many. Finally, he reached his halting-place at a deserted farm-house at 5 P.M., when Fordyce's men, having been on foot for

[1] Smith to Sec. of State, Oct. 15, 1851.

1851. Oct. eighteen hours without food under a burning sun, could hardly stagger into camp.

Somerset gave the men a rest on the next day; and on the 16th, Fordyce's column drove the valley of the Waterkloof upward, while Michel advanced at right angles to them from north to south, upon the neck. Once again there was sharp fighting, and the Kaffirs were driven to take refuge in the bush with some loss; and then the operations were suspended while the troops furnished escorts for the convoy of supplies. This, owing to heavy rain, was a work of time. In the interval the Sixtieth Rifles, under Colonel Nesbitt, reached Fort Beaufort; and on the 24th, Somerset arranged for simultaneous scouring of Fuller's Hoek by Michel, Wolf's Back, a ridge just to north of it, by Nesbitt, and of the northern ridge above the Waterkloof by Fordyce. The process was repeated, notwithstanding heavy rain, during the next three days, the columns moving from different directions, and the infantry working always to drive the enemy into certain known strongholds, which were then shelled by the guns. Then there was the usual pause of a few days, while fresh supplies were brought

Nov. up, and on the 6th of November the work began once more, the columns converging as usual upon the neck, known as the Horse Shoe, at the head of the Waterkloof and Fuller's Hoek. The Kaffirs fought hard on this day, and the Seventy-fourth lost three officers, including Fordyce, and six men killed or mortally wounded, besides six more men severely hurt. But the Highlanders took ample revenge; and after two more days of the like bush-fighting Somerset was able, on the 9th, to report that he had cleared most of the banditti out of the Waterkloof, though there were still strong points held by small parties in the Kroome range. The Gaikas in fact had begun to move eastward, and the beginning of the end was in sight.[1]

[1] Smith to Sec. of State, Nov. 5, 19, 1851, enclosing Somerset's reports of Oct. 28 and Nov. 9. King, *Campaigning in Kaffirland*, Chapters v., vi., vii.

The casualties due to the enemy during the operations between the 14th of October and the 8th of November do not appear to have exceeded fifty killed and wounded; but the sufferings of the troops from hardship, privation and fatigue were very great. They were in fact in bivouac for the greater part of the time, and some throughout it. Smith reported that Michel's brigade had been in the field from the 29th of September to the 13th of November with no tents and with only one blanket for each man. Fordyce's brigade obtained tents after three weeks in the open, but these were what were called patrol-tents, which, with two poles four feet high, could be folded away and carried on a pack-saddle, or even under the arm. They were little more than glorified canvas dog-kennels, into which the owner crept on hands and knees; though even this shelter was welcome against the violence of the South African rains. But frequently after hours of rain the men had to bivouac on a sea of mud, with the result that fever, dysentery and rheumatism played havoc among them. Sometimes the rain turned to sleet, and a bitter wind blew from the snow-capped mountains, which chilled them to the bone. Then the sun would come out, and the heat would become intolerable. Moreover, the exertion of the fighting in the bush was extreme. "Nothing," wrote Captain King of the Seventy-fourth, "more difficult and trying can be imagined than our laborious progress through this all but impracticable forest, studded throughout with enormous masses of detached rock, overgrown with wild vines, twining asparagus trees, endless monkey ropes and other creepers, so strong and so thickly interlaced as almost to put a stop to our advance; covered, moreover, with dense thorny underwood, concealing dangerous clefts and crevices, and strewn with fallen trees in every stage of decay, while the hooked thorns of the 'wait-a-bit' clinging to our arms and legs, snatching the caps off our heads and tearing clothes and flesh, impeded us at

1851. Nov.

1851. Nov. every step."[1] And through this the British soldiers had to make their way, some of them in their ridiculous coatees, carrying a heavy musket, bayonet, water-canteen and three days' rations. No one without experience of virgin forest can have any conception of the physical labour of toiling through it, nor understand how, apart from creepers and undergrowth, a huge fallen trunk, slimy as an eel, may bring a man abruptly to a stand. Yet the men had to surmount or circumvent such obstacles somehow; and their officers had somehow to keep them together and preserve the right direction, on pain, at best, of instant death, or, if haply they were taken alive, of lingering dissolution by hideous torture. And nowhere could they feel assured that naked savages, unencumbered except by their arms, and at home in crag and thicket, were not lying in wait for them, savages who could move swiftly and noiselessly and were so cunning at self-concealment that, at a pinch, they would sink themselves, like a hunted deer, in the water, with nothing but a nose above the surface to betray them.[2] The marvel is, not that there were occasional little mishaps to small parties of soldiers, but that whole companies and even half-battalions were not cut off and destroyed. However, the British soldier is a patient soul, and his dogged perseverance will, if time be granted to him, push any enemy out of any country.

British Ministers, however, have not always the patience of the British soldier, and in October Lord Grey wrote to complain that much less progress had been made with the war than he had expected. He had before him no later reports than of the beginning of September at latest, up to which time Smith, as he pointed out, had been obliged by want of troops to act on the defensive. But Lord Grey had certainly been generous in sending reinforcements unasked, and he seems to have made the mistake of supposing that troops, once arrived at Simon's Bay, were ready for

[1] King, pp. 145-146, 148-149. [2] Ibid. p. 139.

immediate service in the field. He made no allowance, apparently, for the additional voyage of five hundred miles to Port Elizabeth and seven hundred to East London, for possible delays in landing owing to bad weather, for the recovery of the men from long confinement on board ship, and for the time necessary to fit them out with equipment and transport. Yet all of these things signified that a battalion could not hope to take the field in less than ten weeks from the day of sailing from England, which period might very well be prolonged to three months.[1] Nor, again, did Lord Grey appreciate Harry Smith's difficulties owing to the refusal of the native levies to re-enlist and of the Boers to take service at all. He appears, in fact, to have been a man with no powers of imagination. To say that he was ignorant of the barest elements of war is only to say that he was an English Minister of the middle of the nineteenth century; but, apart from that, he had evidently no conception of the huge area of the theatre of operations, and not the haziest idea of what is meant by a new, not to say a savage, country. This was unfortunate, though not perhaps remarkable; and, had Harry Smith been a weak or impulsive man, this letter of reproach might have stirred him into rash and precipitate action. It is by such missives that a Secretary of State, with the best intentions, may be the author of disaster. 1851. Nov.

Happily Harry Smith was too strong and too sensible to be thrown out of his chosen course by unjust criticism from Downing Street. He was satisfied that he had cleared the bulk of the enemy out of the Waterkloof, though that fastness might need yet to be combed out, so to speak, yard by yard; and, as most of the Gaikas had fled with their cattle to the Upper Kei, where they found refuge with the chief, Kreli, he resolved to follow them thither at once, leaving the Seventy-fourth and Ninety-first to patrol the Blink-

[1] The 74th took the field on the 78th day after leaving England, the Rifle Brigade on the 103rd.

1851. water and Fuller's Hoek. The force employed against
Nov. Kreli numbered, in addition to native levies, some five thousand men, carrying one month's supplies; and the operations began on the 27th of November. Heavy and continuous rains caused much delay and many difficulties, but the movement was completely successful; and the arrival of the Forty-third at East London on the 17th of December made good any losses through
1852. sickness. By the beginning of January 1852, Smith was able to report many Kaffirs slain and thirty thousand cattle captured after an almost bloodless campaign. Thereupon all the Gaika chiefs sent emissaries to sue for peace; but Smith rightly doubted their good faith, and, since they did not surrender, as required, within
Feb. eight days, he, at the beginning of February, turned seven columns into the Amatola mountains to devastate and destroy. No resistance was offered, and the Gaikas again sued for peace. Smith gave them three days to consider his requisition that they should quit the Amatolas and cross the Kei, and, receiving no satisfactory answer, began the work of harrying anew on the fourth day. The Kaffirs were evidently at the last gasp, but at the end of February 1852 they still declined to yield.[1]

They had some reason on their side, for they had a warm though unconscious friend in Downing Street. On the 15th of December Grey addressed another carping letter to Smith, questioning the success of his operations in October and November, and adding the truly childish comment that, at their conclusion, it was the rear-guard and not the van of the English troops that was engaged. To this Smith replied, very soberly and truly, that in Kaffir warfare the enemy was everywhere, and could not be said to have any front, flanks or rear; and that those who knew anything of military operations did not judge of them by the affair of a rear-guard. He averred that his success, which was denied to be such

[1] Smith to Sec. of State, Dec. 18, 20, 1851; Jan. 13, 16, 20, Feb. 16, 20, 1852.

in Downing Street, had enabled him to watch the frontier effectively, and to invade and punish Kreli; and, he might have added, had so cowed the Kaffirs that, on the 13th of January, Somerset had driven seven thousand cattle over the thirty-five miles that divided Fort Hare from King William's Town without the slightest molestation. But long before this letter came to Lord Grey's hand he had made up his mind to recall Harry Smith; and by a despatch of the 14th of January accordingly Lord Grey did recall him, alleging that the military losses had been "exceedingly heavy"—the casualties did not amount to seven hundred in fourteen months' fighting—and that the General had displayed "lack of energy and judgement." This precious document reached Harry Smith on the 1st of March. He quietly replied, "I thought it my duty to continue operations," and went on with his work. 1852. Feb.

Meanwhile there had befallen a disaster which not merely affected the Kaffir campaign but left a deep and enduring mark upon the British Army. On the 25th of February the steam troop-ship *Birkenhead*, carrying drafts for nearly every regiment in South Africa, struck a pinnacle rock off Danger Point while on passage from Simon's Bay to Port Elizabeth, and stuck fast. It was night and the sea was dead calm. The captain ordered the boats to be lowered, and reversed the engines; with the result that the ship broke in two and the fore part of the ship sank almost instantly, most of the men in the forward compartments being drowned in their berths. The remainder mustered aft without haste or confusion, and obeyed all commands given to them with coolness and regularity. The women and children were quietly got into the boats, which stood off about a hundred yards from the ship's side; and the officers and men, crowded together in the stern, stood in silence to await the end. In a very few minutes it came. The sternward half of the ship plunged down as had the forward half; and only the main top-mast and topsail yard remained above water. Five officers Feb. 25.

1852. and one hundred and nine men escaped to the shore by swimming or climbing to drift-wood, though many were lost in the fierce surf of a rocky coast. In all fourteen officers and three hundred and forty-nine non-commissioned officers and privates perished, leaving behind them none the less an imperishable name.

The behaviour of all ranks, wrote one of the surviving officers, "far exceeded anything that I thought could be effected by the most perfect discipline. . . . All received and carried out their orders as if embarking for a world's port in lieu of eternity. There was only this difference, that I never saw any embarkation conducted with so little confusion." The story spread far and wide. The King of Prussia ordered it to be read at the head of every regiment in his army as an example of transcendent military obedience; and the old Duke of Wellington, in almost his last public speech, surprised some of his auditors by saying nothing of the courage and devotion of the troops, but by dwelling again and again on their discipline. And most assuredly it was wholly admirable. For these men were not a single battalion, bound together by comradeship and regimental pride. They were young soldiers, in drafts of fifty and sixty, belonging to a dozen different regiments, which had never seen each other before the day of embarkation; yet they bore themselves as if they had been old blue-jackets of the smartest King's ships. Their example sank down deep into the heart not only of the Army but of the nation. Many troopships have been wrecked since the *Birkenhead*, yet never has there been disorder; while at least twice—in the case of the *Sarah Sands* and the *Warren Hastings*—sheer magnificent discipline has saved whole battalions from destruction. Civilians, too, have caught the infection from the Army; and, when British passenger-vessels are wrecked, we read again and again the same story of freedom from panic, orderliness, patience and self-denial among British men and women. It has become a point of national honour that they should

show themselves worthy of the young soldiers of the *Birkenhead*. 1852.

At the moment, however, the loss of three hundred drafts only added one more to the heavy trials which had fallen upon Harry Smith. He bowed to it, as to all others, and quietly carried on his work. On the 4th of March Somerset reopened operations in the Water- March.
kloof with a smart affair with Macomo's people, who assailed him in flanks and rear and were not beaten back without a struggle which cost some thirty casualties, including three officers of the Ninety-first wounded.[1] On the 5th Smith moved his head-quarters to Fort Beaufort, where he had already assembled two columns under Michel and Eyre,[2] and ordered another column under Colonel Napier to a station known as Haddon's Old Post, at the westward end of the Waterkloof. To north, north-east and east of the mountain-mass he strengthened the posts at Fort Retief, Eland's Post and Blinkwater Fort, so that they should be able to furnish patrols, and did the like even for remote Whittlesea, thirty miles north-east of Fort Retief; while to secure himself from any distraction in his rear he sent Percival to harry the fastnesses of the Fish river. By the 9th all preparations were complete, and Smith, shifting his head-quarters to the Blinkwater Post, issued his orders for the morrow. Eyre's column, on the right, starting from Blinkwater Post, on the east, was to clear Fuller's Hoek; Michel's column in the centre was to move from Blakeway's Farm, on the south, ascend the Kroome heights and make for the neck of land between the heads of Fuller's Hoek and Waterkloof; Napier's column on the left was to move with his infantry and Cape Mounted Rifles up the northern side of the Waterkloof to its head, and meet Michel's attack from

[1] McKay, *Reminiscences of the Last Kaffir War*, pp. 143-144.

[2] *Michel's Column*: 12th Lancers, large det. C.M.R., 6th, 4 cos. 45th, 60th, native levies, 2 guns. *Eyre's Column*: 43rd, 73rd, native levies, 4 guns. *Napier's Column*: 4 cos. 74th, 91st, det. C.M.R., native levies.

1852. March. the south with a corresponding attack from the north, holding his native levies ready to cut off all dislodged Kaffirs, and detaching the Twelfth Lancers to Eland's Post to intercept any fugitives that might make for that quarter.

Mar. 10. On the 10th the columns advanced, and Eyre, who had been reinforced by two companies of the Seventy-fourth, began his attack on Fuller's Hoek with eight small columns, so as to comb it out thoroughly. With immense difficulty his four guns were brought up a precipitous ascent to commanding positions on the north side of the valley; and, having carried all before him for a certain distance up the valley, Eyre bivouacked for the night. Meanwhile the advance of Napier had headed the Kaffirs back from passing over the head of Fuller's Hoek into the Waterkloof. He was fiercely attacked until Michel's column appeared from the opposite quarter, when the Kaffirs fled; and meanwhile mounted patrols on the north side of the Waterkloof intercepted their escape to the Kat river.

Mar. 11. On the 11th Eyre prepared for a hard day's work, designing to dislodge the Kaffirs from positions which hitherto had been merely passed by. The most formidable of these, near the head of Fuller's Hoek, was known as Macomo's den, which was reputed to be inaccessible, the only approach to it being down a natural flight of steps. A female prisoner acted as guide. Eyre's four guns plied the den with shell, and the famous stronghold was successfully stormed. The bodies were found of some twenty Kaffirs who had been killed by the artillery, apart from those slain in the assault; but over one hundred women and children were taken unhurt among the clefts of the rocks. Michel and Napier continued throughout the day to scour the Waterkloof; and therewith the operations came for a time to an end, the troops having exhausted the three days' supplies which they carried on them, and being compelled to fall back on their bases for food. The Kaffirs on this day had still spirit enough to attack in

front and flank one column as it fell back down Fuller's Hoek, and killed an officer and three men before they were driven off. Their spirit was not yet quite quenched, but the flame burned feebly. 1852. March.

On the 15th the troops, having revictualled themselves, returned again to the same ground, reinforced by a small body of four hundred burghers, who alone had obeyed Smith's summons to come forward for service. Eyre once more scoured every corner of Fuller's Hoek, including Macomo's den, without seeing a sign of an enemy; and it was plain that his work was finished. Michel on the same day had a sterner task in the Waterkloof, where the Kaffirs turned to bay in a stronghold known as the Iron Mountain. They were in such force that they could not be dislodged by a small column; and Michel, finding it impossible to turn the position, was fain to take the bull by the horns and make a frontal attack. So stubborn was the resistance that the first assault was repulsed; but a company of the Sixtieth presently carried the fortress with fixed swords, and the Kaffirs, once driven out, were hunted away with great slaughter. This completed the first stage of Harry Smith's operations. The mountain-mass of Fuller's Hoek, Waterkloof and Blinkwater, had been finally cleared at last. The Kaffirs were flying in all directions. Many fugitives, besides horses and cattle, had been swept up by the Twelfth Lancers and by other mounted troops. Moreover, Percival had been as successful in the basin of the Fish river as Smith further north. With a little more of this unrelenting pressure the resistance of the Kaffirs would be broken.[1] Mar. 15.

On the 18th, therefore, Smith left the pursuit of the enemy about the Waterkloof to Somerset, and having gathered together fifteen days' supplies, marched with Eyre's, Michel's and Percival's columns for the Tyumie river upon the track of the fugitives who had fled to the Amatolas. For four days they scoured the Mar. 18.

[1] Smith to Sec. of State, March 17, 1852.

1852. March. country to eastward, and drove the Kaffirs before them towards the Kei; and on the 25th, the district being practically clear, Smith disposed his columns from Fort Cox north-eastward to the Quilli Quilli mountains, Keiskamma Hoek and Kabousie Neck, with orders to patrol the Amatolas continually, while Somerset should act to north of the Amatola range. He also ordered the First Battalion of the Rifle Brigade, which had arrived on the 24th, to form a flying camp on the Waterkloof and Blinkwater so that there might be no recrudescence of trouble in that quarter. In fact the work of the war had been practically done. Somerset with Napier's column had pressed the pursuit from the Waterkloof persistently and with marked success. The Kaffirs confessed to a total loss of six thousand warriors, including eighty chiefs; and over eighty thousand cattle, besides goats innumerable, had been captured. Yet just at this moment, on the 8th of April, Harry Smith's successor, Sir George Cathcart, reached East London, and the reins were taken out of Smith's hands.[1]

There can be, I think, little doubt that Lord Grey, by superseding Harry Smith, not only behaved most unjustly to him but achieved the very result which he most desired to avoid, the prolongation of the war. Sandile, as Harry Smith wrote, had information of the change of commanders, and continued his resistance, hoping that the new Governor would grant him more favourable terms. In fact it is impossible to banish a suspicion that the intrigues of South African politicians, or missionaries, or both had been at work in Downing Street to undermine Harry Smith's influence, and to bring about his downfall. These same politicians and missionaries, with their wild talk and unscrupulous dealing, had unquestionably been the cause of the Hottentot rebellion; and what further sinister designs and wild projects they may have entertained it is impossible to conjecture, for no folly is too extravagant

[1] Smith to Sec. of State, Mar. 17, April 7, 17; Cathcart to same, April 20, 1852.

and no ambitions too dangerous for half-educated men athirst for power. However, it is thanks to them that we now have to take leave of Harry Smith, the soldier with the widest range of active service that is, so far as I know, to be found in the records of the British Army. His first action was the storm of Monte Video in 1807, his second the attack on Buenos Ayres; after which he went with Sir John Moore first to Sweden, then to Spain, where he passed through the campaign of Coruña, and, returning in time to share in Craufurd's famous march to Talavera, served from that point to the end of the Peninsular War. Thence he went straight to North America, fought at Bladensburg, brought home dispatches of the action, returned to share in the operations at New Orleans, and, crossing the Atlantic once more, arrived just in time for the battle of Waterloo. He served next in the army of occupation in France, then at Halifax, then in Jamaica, then at the Cape, where we have already seen him in the First Kaffir war, then in India, in the last Mahratta and First Sikh wars, and finally once again at the Cape. Everywhere distinguished, it is probable that in spite of his disgrace, his latest service was the most valuable of his life. It was due to his calmness and courage that the awful peril of a general rising of black against white was averted from South Africa, and to his amazing energy and quickening spirit that the rebellion was within fifteen months successfully overcome. He was warmly welcomed in England, where the public felt that he had been very shabbily treated; and the old Duke of Wellington not only asked him to the last of the Waterloo banquets at Apsley House, but himself proposed the toast of his health. Most honourable to him of all, perhaps, was the fact that he accepted an invitation to dinner from Lord Grey himself, who had been driven from office at the fall of Lord John Russell's administration in February 1852. Harry Smith gave the Minister credit for having acted towards him from a sense of public duty only, and feeling no personal

1852.

1852. resentment against him, saw no ground for a quarrel. Lord Grey was far too great a gentleman not to appreciate what he justly styled "most handsome and honourable conduct," and the two men met as friends and parted with increase of mutual esteem. Of all of Harry Smith's actions this, perhaps, is best worth remembering both by soldiers and statesmen.

No better man could have been chosen for his successor than Major-general George Cathcart. His military experience was almost unique in the British Army, for he had served as aide-de-camp to his father, Lord Cathcart, when the latter was attached to the Grand Army of the Allies in 1813 and 1814, had been present at eight great actions, and had written a careful study of these campaigns. He had further commanded both a battalion of infantry and a regiment of cavalry in time of peace, and thus made himself a perfect master of every detail of his profession; and he added to these qualifications the further gifts of an able, cultivated and upright gentleman. Harry Smith gave him every information in his power, and Cathcart, without hesitation, decided to carry on his policy. The back of the Kaffirs' resistance had been broken. They had, excepting a few small parties, been driven from the Waterkloof and the Amatola mountains; and it was necessary only to maintain Smith's dispositions to prevent them, by constant patrols, from reassembling, and to break up the gangs of banditti, which were more mischievous than formidable. The chief Kreli was still recalcitrant, as also was Moshesh, chief of the Basutos, and these would require to be punished; but the remainder were not likely to give much trouble. It would be tedious and unprofitable to recount Cathcart's operations in detail, for they were practically bloodless to the troops, though very fatal to the Kaffirs. He twice combed out the Waterkloof mountains in the course of July; but the enemy fled and hid themselves like hunted beasts, or were slain; and the erection of a redoubt on the neck of land at the head of the Water-

kloof and of Fuller's Hoek forbade any further struggles. 1852.
In August two columns were sent into Kreli's country and captured ten thousand head of cattle almost unresisted. In September Cathcart reported that the war was at an end, though Sandile and Macomo, with a few followers, were still in the Amatolas, as likewise a gang of Hottentot marauders. By November these had been broken up and driven out, and Cathcart was free to act against the Basutos.[1]

In the middle of November troops began to stream Nov.
northward upon Burghersdorp, about one hundred and fifty miles north of Fort Beaufort, and by the 27th the column was there assembled, numbering in all about twenty-three hundred of all ranks.[2] The infantry was divided into two portions, "which," wrote Cathcart, "however diminutive I must call brigades," the Queen's and Seventy-fourth being under Lieutenant-colonel Macduff of the latter regiment, and the remaining detachments under Major Pinckney of the Seventy-third. Eyre held supreme command of the mighty division composed of both brigades. The heat during the day was so intense that Cathcart sent the cavalry forward to the Orange river on the evening of the 28th, and the rest of the troops followed before daylight of the two following days. The Orange river and the Caledon were crossed by fords; and, after three days' halt by the latter stream to replenish supplies from a depôt, prepared beforehand, at Smithfield, the column on the 13th of December reached Platberg, within sight Dec.
of Thaba Bosiu, Moshesh's stronghold, and of the lofty table-land of Berea to north of it. On the 14th Moshesh came out to visit the General, but declined to pay the fine of cattle imposed upon him, and on the 19th

[1] Cathcart to Sec. of State, March 31, April 20, May 20, June 21, July 20, Aug. 15, Sept. 20, Oct. 12, Nov. 14, 1852.

[2] *Cavalry*: Lt.-col. Napier—12th Lancers; 202 C.M.R.; 250 R.E.; 20 with caoutchouc pontoon; R.A., 3 guns; and rockets.
Infantry: Lt.-col. Eyre—Queen's, 400; 43rd, 320; 73rd, 330; 74th, 400; Rifle Brigade, 100. These numbers signify rank and file.

1852. Dec. Cathcart intimated that, if the cattle were not delivered, he should come and take them. He further moved part of his infantry to a ford on the Caledon immediately to north of the Berea to show that he was in earnest. Riding to this point next day with his cavalry and guns Cathcart was fired at, and from that moment hostilities were unavoidable.

The Berea, to the summit of which the Basutos had driven their cattle, is a long, scarped table-land, measuring roughly some twelve miles east and west by four north and south. The plateau is plain straight-forward ground, but the access to it is difficult except at certain points, the sides being for miles absolutely precipitous, and for the most part steep. Cathcart decided to send Eyre with the bulk of the infantry to sweep the table-land, while one detachment under his own command should move round to western and southern bases, and the cavalry under Napier should scour the northern and eastern bases, to prevent the escape of the cattle. Eyre ascended to the summit accordingly, but, finding vast herds before him, could not resist the temptation to try to take them all. Napier likewise must needs ascend to the summit in chase of cattle; and meanwhile the large masses of Basutos, chiefly mounted men, closed in upon Cathcart's little isolated column, which consisted of no more than three companies of the Forty-third, detachments of the Twelfth Lancers and Cape Mounted Rifles, and, fortunately, three guns. In this dangerous position he remained for some hours, until at 5 P.M. Eyre returned, having spent most of his time fighting for his captured cattle, of which he brought away about fifteen hundred. Napier in due time also reappeared, though a small party of his men, having mistaken their way down the mountain-side, were cut off and destroyed. By some accounts Cathcart's peril was for some time very great, and it seems certain that the Basutos continued their attacks after Eyre had joined him, and that firing did not cease until 8 P.M. The troops were wearied out, having been on foot for

more than twelve hours; but the casualties in the whole engagement did not exceed fifty-three, half of which were due to the mishap, above recounted, to the Twelfth Lancers. A force which can extricate itself with a loss of no greater than two per cent of its numbers cannot be considered to have run very serious risk; and, had not Moshesh at midnight sent in a message of abject submission, Cathcart was fully resolved to continue his operations on the following day. Thus the brief campaign against the Basutos was satisfactorily concluded; within three months the Gaikas agreed to retire permanently to the east of the Kei, according to the wise arrangement originally made by D'Urban; and the war was over.[1] 1852. Dec. 20.

A campaign of bush-fighting is the least satisfactory of all to deal with on paper. Maps are useless except to indicate the general outline of the operations; and no words could describe the accidents of the ground within, for instance, the twenty square miles of the mountain-mass of the Kroome, Waterkloof and Fuller's Hoek. A writer, who has no experience of such fighting, can picture it only in imagination, and trust that his readers may be able to call it up more vividly than himself. A few points may, however, be briefly mentioned. First, as to the dress of all ranks, it seems that the men's clothing fell to rags after a very few days of patrol-duty in the forest, and that they supplemented it as best they could, while the officers hardly made a pretence of wearing uniform. The men of the Sixth are described as in "red coats patched with leather, canvas and cloth of all colours, with straw hats, wide-awakes, long beards, tattered trousers and broken boots revealing stockingless feet." Such things, no doubt,

[1] There are accounts of the action of Berea in Correspondence of General Sir G. Cathcart, pp. 179 *sq.*, 230 *sq.*, 343-345; King, pp. 320-323; McKay, pp. 173-176; Moodie, *History of Battles, etc., in South Africa*, pp. 75-85. Mr. C. Tylden of South Africa, who lives near the Berea, has very kindly sent me many valuable details concerning the action and the ground.

1852. are seen in many campaigns, but the point is that the men could hardly have gone through their bush-fighting with ease until they had brought their clothing into this condition; their parti-coloured garments being well calculated for invisibility, and their borrowed head-dresses affording better protection from the sun than shako or forage-cap. As to officers, we have a picture of Colonel Michel in action, with his shirt sleeves tucked up to his elbows, his wide-awake cocked on one side, strong blucher boots on his feet, and corduroy trousers on his legs. Hard wear and common sense, in fact, compelled clothing regulations to go to the wall.[1]

Next, it should seem that, though the use of the whistle was not yet general, common sense once more imposed upon officers the use of sound-signals for the control of their men in the forest. Colonel Eyre, who was a highly accomplished bush-fighter, seems to have brought this system to some perfection, for we have a glimpse of him, in one of the deep wooded valleys adjoining Fuller's Hoek, directing the movements of a thousand invisible men in several distinct bodies by sound of bugle. He had taken a bugler from each regiment, who conveyed his orders by sounding first the regimental and company calls and then adding the "advance," the "retire," "right or left incline," as might be required. This may have been nothing new; but this is the first mention of it, as far as I know, in the history of the Army, and is therefore worth recording.[2]

Lastly, this Kaffir War gives us the first example of a

[1] King, p. 110; McKay, p. 150.

[2] King, p. 269.

The authorities for the Kaffir War of 1851–1852 are at the Public Record Office C.O. 48, Vols. 312-325; *Life of Sir Harry Smith*; *Correspondence of Sir G. Cathcart*; Godlonton and Irving, *Narrative of the Kaffir War*; King's *Campaigning in Kaffirland* (very useful); McKay's *Reminiscences of the Last Kaffir War* (worth little); Moodie's *History of the Battles, etc., in South Africa*. Some information may be found also in Levinge's *History of the Forty-third* and Cope's *History of the Rifle Brigade*.

rifle, carrying a conical bullet, and of fairly long range, in the hands of the British soldier in action. The Minie rifle, a muzzle-loading weapon, was preparing for issue to the Army, and a certain number of these were given, for purposes of experiment, to the troops in South Africa early in 1852. At first there were enough only for six men in each company, which were naturally distributed among the six best shots. Big game being then abundant in the sphere of the operations, every officer had a rifle and made himself at least a fair, if not always an excellent, marksman. The men, stirred by their example, took readily to the new weapon. The officers encouraged them by giving prizes for shooting; and, with a white target six feet high and three feet wide, the men generally made two hits out of five shots at a range of from five hundred to eight hundred yards, and one hit out of seven shots at nine hundred yards. Compared with the results attained with modern weapons at the present day these do not sound great achievements in marksmanship; but at the time they were reasonably considered marvellous, and they must have counted for something in the work of the campaign, for at a range of from twelve to thirteen hundred yards small bodies of Kaffirs could be dispersed, even if not killed. We have not yet quite seen the last of the old smooth-bore musket; but it was already doomed to give place to the rifle, the new weapon which was destined to work greater changes in war within fifty years than in the whole period between Naseby and Waterloo. 1852.

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